1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11

173 buried in it. Our first Chief was *Nopeog*. The present Chief is the
622 thirteenth of his line. There are no *Ten'dan'* at Biun[1]; the Chief per-
304 forms sacrifices. We no longer circumcise. Our Chiefs get the red fez from Kurugu. We no longer speak Dagwanert' (Dagomba).

173 The history of the ruling class of almost every Talense town follows
565 these lines. This upper class were scions of the Kings of Mampruse, from which place, according to themselves, the black race, i.e. the upper classes of Moshi, Dagomba, and Mampruse—and, just possibly, Ashanti—sprang.

178 The *Ten'dan'*, among the Talense, have for the most part fallen upon evil days. One old grey-beard, whom I came to know well enough for him to feel he could express his thoughts to me without fear or evasion, said, 'We were once the owners of this land; since the scorpion Europeans came we have entered into holes. You have burned our bows and arrows; we once were keepers of the moons' (referring to the fact that the *Ten'dan'* knew the time for certain annual festivals and kept the calendars.

618 *Clans*: The word for clan—a patrilineal and exogamous division—
128 is *burt*, pl. *bura*. As already stated above, I omitted to make exhaustive enquiries as to the clans to which the majority of the common people in each *tey* (settlement) belonged, merely recording in my notebook at the time what I had been told by the various Chiefs or their satellites, with the result that, in almost every case, I have written 'lion clan' opposite the names of the various Talense settlements. In the light of subsequent experience, I now am positive that this statement requires considerable qualification. What I recorded was really only the clan of the particular kindred-group who supplied the ruler. Had I made more extensive enquiries it would, I am certain, have been found that in each *tey* (town, Nankanse *teya*) there was a predominant, if not a single, group belonging to one or another of the clans with whose names we have now become acquainted in dealing with the Nankanse, in addition to the lion clan of the Territorial Ruler. I have, in fact, a note to the effect that the majority of the people of *Tɔnzu* appear to be of the *Ye-ba* (leopard clan), and that certain of my informants state they belong to the *Sakur* (tortoise), *Mey* (water-turtle), *Sako* (a wild cat ?), *Nwan* (monkey) and *Waf'* (python), clans.

173 'I rise (after death) a *sako*', said one informant, "that is my *burt* (clan),
● 784 but I also taboo *sakur* and *mey*. My ancestor *Tamperypeleg* (white-

[1] This, I was later informed, was not the case, but my informants did not wish the correct facts to be known.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11

ashes) was blind, when a *sakur* and *mey* came and asked him what was the matter. He replied, "Sickness." They said, "Open your eyes," and he could see.'

In one of the tribal histories recorded above we again have an example of the violation of a taboo after death—dressing the dead body in a goat-skin. With regard to what we may call the 'royal clan', i.e. lion clan, I was told: 'In olden times, if any one killed a lion, the skin was sent to the Chief of Kurugu, who then sent it on to the Chief of Mampurugu. There a funeral ceremony was held for it.'

Blood Relationship: Relationship, transmitted through the female line, is called *soog'* (compare the Nankanse *sōō*). The *soog'* groups are well known, but, as far as I could discover, do not bear any special names. The *soog'* exhibits all the characteristics already noted with regard to the Nankanse *sōō*.[1] A male cannot transmit a taint of witchcraft, inherited from his mother. 'If your mother can fly (*ak*) (that is, is a witch), you can fly.' (*Soe* is a witch in Talene).

'My sister's child is my *soog'*, my brother's child is not; he is my son.' Again, *ziim* (blood) and *soog'* are synonymous terms.

[1] See Chapter XVIII.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11

XXXVII

THE TALENSE (*continued*)

Tɔŋ-nab

THE ceremony I am about to describe was one which I witnessed on Sunday 6 May 1928. It was, perhaps, the most interesting and extraordinary of many curious rites which it has been my privilege to attend in the course of many years of anthropological field-work. Perhaps I regard it thus because particular associations have made it so for me, but I use the word 'extraordinary' advisedly, on account of the almost grotesque blending of the ultra-new with the things which are very old. Flying machines, motor-cars, and the cultivation of cocoa—these seem out of place with pagan gods and naked humanity, but in this ceremony all were mingled, and staged in a setting which must have been familiar to troglodyte man. *Tɔŋ-nab*[1] means literally the Chief of Tɔŋ. Its shrine is perhaps the best known in the country about which I write, and its fame and name have passed beyond the boundaries of the Northern Territories and reached as far down as to the sea-board towns of the Gold Coast.

'Its power is from God (*Na Yin*); its priest is the local *Ten'dan*'; its taboos, which must be observed by all its devotees, include the following avoidances:

(*a*) Clothes, when attending ceremonies in connexion with its cult.
(*b*) *Zia-kom* (corn and water mixed).
(*c*) Beer made from *zia*-corn.
(*d*) *Meŋa* (water turtle).
(*e*) *Sakur* (tortoise).
(*f*) *Bandog* (crocodile).
(*g*) *Wafo* (python).

An oath may be taken on this god, which runs: *M'po Tɔŋ nab la a zia koom* (I swear by *Tɔŋ nab* and its corn-water).

The home of this deity is in the Tong Hills, that beautiful low range which rises from the compound-scattered millet flats below. There seem to be two rendezvous at which the hundreds of pilgrims, who come from all quarters in the dry seasons to make their vows before this shrine, foregather. After climbing from the plains one enters a rugged

[1] It is also known as *Ta ni* and *Ta pwiga*.

1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
FE11 Tallensi FE11
NAMNAM

kills a beast, I receive some, not otherwise. I own the land in the bush, not so the *Godau*.

'Things found on the land, except beads, belong to the *Ten'dan*', also lost fowls, iron, worked or unworked, goats, sheep, and cows. A horse or a donkey goes to the Chief; these are not permitted to enter my kraal. If any one found these things and kept them, his home would break. The finder of beads, guinea-fowls, a cloth, cowries, may keep them if not claimed, but if the cowries[1] were many, he would give some to the Chief and to the *Ten'dan*'. A lost child belongs to the Chief; it is forbidden for a *Ten'dan*' to take such a one, she may not eat anything with hairs (i.e. a person).'

Tattooing: A *Ten'dan*' must not have tattoo marks, but markings called *Taavelem* do not matter.[2]

Harvest Festivals: 'Beans, ground-nuts, and new crops must first be given to the groves, after which every one may eat. Only naked people may go to the groves. A *Ten'dan*' has to be so careful not to eat new crops before the groves have done so, that, when the corn is ripening, his water-pots have to be covered over to prevent any grain from being blown into them.' He concluded the above by stating: 'Our ancestors did not come from any other place. *Na Wen* (God) created our *Yaba* and allowed him to be on the land. No stranger can possess *ten-kur* (land stones).[3] Formerly we called our land Zug, and there were only thorns upon it. Then the Dagbama (Dagomba) came and ate the Chieftainship and called the land Gohe-nam or Nangoot. Our mother's children are the *Ten'dan*' of Pals (near Zuarono). They went there from this place. Our taboo is red clay; we do not use it for plastering the walls of compounds.'[4]

A rapid survey of other matters, fully described in previous chapters, revealed everywhere a uniform similarity in customs and beliefs with those of their neighbours. A more intensive investigation will no doubt reveal differences in detail here and there, but the task of recording these I must leave to others and pass on to examine the next tribe, the Kusase.

[1] See p. 378.
[2] This prohibition was, I was informed, only local.
[3] See p. 256.
[4] See footnote 6, p. 244.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)-1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

CHAPTER V

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NAMOOS

The Distinctive Ritual Observances of the Namoos

602 648 CLUSTERED about the chain of sub-clans that makes up the clan of Mosuor biis are a number of other Namoo communities. None of them has ties of clanship with Mosuor biis; yet the latter speak of them as *ti buurət*, our stock, or *ti mabiis*, our kin. The emphasis here is on the common Mampuru origin claimed for all Namoos. It is widely known among the Tallensi that groups of people claiming to be of Mampuru origin are found scattered throughout the Northern Territories and the adjacent parts of the French Haute Volta. Though they have no political or social ties with them, Tale Namoos assert that they are of the same stock (*buurət*) as the Mossi in French territory, the Dagomba in British territory, and the various clans claiming Mampuru origin among the Gorisi, the Namnam, the Kusaasi, the Bulisi, and other neighbouring groups.

171 ●784 Whether or no these people reached their present locations by migration from Mampurugu, it is a fact that they all have certain ritual observances in common, and most of them keep up quasi-political or ceremonial ties with the dominant section of the Mamprusi, who share these distinctive ritual observances. In all these groups of people a man's first-born son and first-born daughter may not eat the domestic fowl, are forbidden, during their father's lifetime, to wear any of his garments or his quiver [764] and to enter or even look into his granary. Amongst all of them a man's corpse is girded with a goatskin loin-cover (*ba suona buu*) ritually decorated with three cowrie shells; and one of their most solemn oaths is to swear by 'my father and his goatskin and his three cowrie shells (*mba ni u buu ni u ligəri ata*)'—a reference to this burial custom.

184 784 These are infallible tests. A number of other ritual observances and doctrines mostly connected with mortuary and funeral ceremonies are also distinctive of Namoos. Thus, if a man is survived by his first-born son and daughter, or by either, special rites are performed to release them from the taboo on using their father's garments, weapons, and granary; and the concluding rites of a Namoo funeral are also distinctive. But these ritual observances and the notions connected with them vary in detail and nuance from clan to clan and even between segments of a single clan. Some Namoo clans and clan segments have discriminative totems similar to those of non-Namoo clans in addition to the first-born child's avoidances. They may be totems associated with the locality in which they have settled, as for instance the leopard avoidance of the people of Dkoog (Winkogo); or they may be totems symbolizing the mythical event to which the clan or lineage in question attributes its original differentiation from other like units, as, for instance, the avoidance of the crocodile (*bay*) by one major segment of Bayana yidəm at Sie. Special myths often validate these avoidances, which serve thus to distinguish a particular clan or lineage from other Namoos in Taleland.

[P.66]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

We have noted that Tale culture is homogeneous. Thus the totemic taboos of the Tale Namoos and their characteristic funeral rites, distinctive as they are, are homologous in form and function with the totemic observances and funeral rites of non-Namoos. We shall see the evidence for this when we examine the more elaborate differentiation of Talis and other non-Namoo clans and lineages by totemic and other ritual observances. Tallensi know this and take it for granted, as they also take for granted variations in the ritual observances of different communities which are presumed to have identical ritual forms. They attribute such variations to the influence of neighbouring communities. In fact the homologous usages of neighbouring communities have features in common which do not occur among more widely separated clans with the same practices.

But the taboos of the first-born and the goatskin loin-cover of the dead are fixed and unalterable. All Tallensi know that these are the distinguishing *kiha* (sing. *kihər*)—literally, forbidden things, but meaning ritual injunctions as well as prohibitions—of all Namoos, 'from Dagbon to Mooga', as the natives say.

Namoos say that they observe these *kiha* 'because it is the custom of our ancestors (*ti yaab yɛl nla*)'. They require no other explanation, but accept such ritual observances as facts of immemorial antiquity and part of the fixed order of society. The taboo of the fowl is the only one of these observances for which a myth of origin exists, and this is typical of the Tale myths purporting to account for the origins of totemic avoidances, being apparently trivial in content and neutral in emotional tone. Considering the fluid form and content of such myths and the fact that they are never deliberately taught, this myth is remarkably consistent in outline among Namoo clans in Taleland.[1] Tallensi display no interest in the private myths of any social group other than their own, and therefore make no secret of these myths. Knowledge of them is not deemed to be a necessary condition of adherence to the tenets they enshrine. Most young Namoos and many older men, even those who have themselves to observe the fowl taboo—an onerous enough restriction in a society whose chief sacrificial animal is the fowl—are ignorant of or but hazily acquainted with the myth. The men who know it tell it without reticence.

Significance of the Totemic Taboos of the Namoos

The fowl taboo, Namoos say, came about because 'a fowl did a great service to our ancestor'. He had a wife, and people came to her with slander of her husband, trying thus to persuade her to leave him. This made her very unhappy. But one day a broody hen sitting in the women's grinding room told her not to weep. When her husband returns from the farm she must prepare a drink of flour-water for him, said the fowl, and it would fly up and dash the calabash from his hand. If he then killed the fowl in anger the woman would know that he was a wicked man, and if he spared it she would know that people were slandering him maliciously. When the man came home, the plan was carried out. Far from injuring

[1] Different versions of the myth are found among Namoos outside Taleland, but the central theme is the same. All versions stress the point that the intervention of a fowl was responsible for the birth of the clan.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

the paramount moral values of the Namoos. The oath a Namoo swears by his father and his goatskin and his three cowrie shells to rebut an accusation or assert his honesty is evidence of this.

The natives think of these rules as coeval with their social order. They are axioms of conduct, which men accept without questioning as they accept the fact that one is born a Namoo. Since they are binding on and restricted to the patrilineal line of descent, these avoidances serve to express the ultimate and unconditional validity of agnatic descent, through which the individual's place in a corporate unit is irrevocably fixed at birth, and by which his whole social and spiritual destiny is largely controlled. Through ignorance or stupidity, irreverence or lack of self-control, individuals sometimes, though very rarely, break these taboos. Such lapses will bring down mystical retribution on the sinner's head; that is his affair. They cannot impair the intrinsic validity of these rules or undermine their obligatory character.

It would be inconceivable for a Namoo to flout the taboo of the goatskin loin-cover for the dead. To do so would be a sacrilege so gratuitous and so lunatic as to lie beyond the bounds of sane human behaviour. Actually a situation in which such a sacrilege would be possible would never occur, for the simple reason that a death is an affair of the clan. The clan elders conduct all mortuary and funeral ceremonies, and the inviolability of the prescribed ritual is thus safeguarded by the mechanics of its performance.

It is otherwise with the fowl taboo. This too the natives consider to be something so fundamental and axiomatic that it requires no sanction against possible breach except by accident. The danger of a breach occurs only with children. The first-born child who eats a fowl or even a hen's egg, either through inadvertence, through greed, or through childish recklessness, may sink into a decline (*u burəmrəme*), or at the least will break out in a rash on the head (*u zug koorəme*). But such a transgression by a child is venial, and the antidote is simple. The child is given an infusion of fowl droppings in water to drink which makes him vomit and so purges him.

Observation and questioning show that breaches of this taboo are as rare as the natives assert them to be. I have often seen a first-born man (*nɔ-kihir*, pl. *-kihib*, one who taboos the fowl) sacrificing fowls to his ancestor spirits and leaving them to others to consume. After such a rite a *nɔ-kihir* always washes his hands carefully lest he contaminate his food at the next meal with the blood of the fowl. Not only do parents, siblings, and other relatives take care to prevent children from breaking the taboo, but the children who have to observe it have a horror of doing so. By the time they are five or six years old children will tell an inquirer with great emphasis, 'I am an eldest child, and I don't eat fowl'. Though they do not know the myth that accounts for the taboo, they appreciate its obligatory character.

We have spoken of these taboos as symbols of moral values because, though binding on all Namoos, they do not imply specific ties either political or ceremonial, and are obligatory on individuals. Their observance is in the last resort a matter of conscience and belief. In the widest

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

577 social setting they identify Namoo communities by contraposition with
784 non-Namoo neighbours. The phrase 'we of the Mampuru stock' merely labels a category of clans. It becomes a coefficient of conduct for the individual within the context of clanship, local, and community ties.

613 The dispute over the succession to the custody of the shrine (*bɔyar*)
428 of the founding ancestor of Bɔyada biis at Tongo was a case in point.
627 Saŋgbɔŋ, the son of the deceased custodian, who had been head of Yiyaam biis, one major segment of the lineage, refused to hand the shrine over to Tinta'alam, the oldest living member of the whole lineage. He alleged that the latter's segment (Yidaan biis) were 'sister's children', that is, an attached lineage descended from a Sii man. All the men of Yidaan biis rallied unanimously around Tinta'alam, angry and resentful at this slur on their status. 'If we don't get the *bɔyar*', they explained, 'people will scoff at us, saying that we are the descendants of a slave' (i.e. not the authentic progeny of Mosuor).

The case was argued, with an acrimony which was hard to conceal, before the chief. Saŋgbɔŋ contended that Yidaan biis could not be debarred from taking part in sacrifices to the shrine of Bɔyada, but, as an attached lineage, they had no right to its custody. Tinta'alam, speaking for the whole segment of Yidaan biis, denied this story as a pack of lies, but his opponent refused to abandon his position. At length the chief put the decisive question to the elders who were present. 'What', he asked, 'do the people of Sii taboo?' 'The tortoise (*ɲakur*), the water tortoise (*mieŋ*), and the crocodile (*baŋ*)', said one of the elders, 'and they dress their dead in a sheepskin loin-cover (*ba suona ɲchug*), and do not taboo the fowl.' 'And what about you Namoos?' queried the chief. 'Do you avoid the fowl, or do you not? Do you put a sheepskin loin-cover on the dead?' The elders answered this rhetorical question, 'Of course we taboo the fowl! And we use a goatskin for the dead. When Talis slaughter the sheep to gird their dead we would not even touch the meat.' 'Now,' continued the chief, 'if Yidaan had come to live here with his mother's brother as an acknowledged son of a Sii man, would he have discarded his forefathers' taboos?' 'Neither he nor his descendants', exclaimed the elders with one voice; 'if they had done so they would suffer for it, they would all die out.' And an attached lineage which Saŋgbɔŋ had adduced in support of his case was quoted in proof; for they still retain the taboos of the Talis because their founder had been legitimately and ritually a member of a Talis clan. Moreover, there was the case of Puliebar yidem, the Tongo lineage living at Gorogo, who keep their Namoo taboos. There was a time when they lost many members through death in quick succession, and diviners revealed that this was a retribution for trying to participate in the initiation cult of their Talis kin. The tone and attitude of the elders showed impressively the moral importance to the natives of these taboos. It was common knowledge, they said, that Tinta'alam and all the members of his segment observe the Namoo taboos. Saŋgbɔŋ's story was palpably false. However, to make the decision conclusive and to save it from rankling it was left to an oracle.

[787] A fowl was slaughtered with an invocation to the ancestors and the posture in which it died showed which of the disputants was in the right.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

764 daughters always come to funerals in their paternal family. They have
184 special ritual duties, some specific to that clan, some more general. They are apt, then, to follow the procedures to which they have become accustomed in their husband's home and have, therefore, to be closely supervised.

In all these mortuary and funeral rites there is a tendency for the plainsmen to have one type of variant, while the Hill clans favour another. There is less variation in the details of rites among the clans of either group than between the two groups, and the clans at the foot of the Hills show variants of ritual usage intermediate between those of the plains Talis and of the Hill clans. Thus, one of the most solemn and sacred of the rites which transform the brute fact of death into the mystical fact of spiritual status is the rite of *kpe kpiintaŋ*. It is usually regarded as distinctive of the Namoos, but it occurs also in the funeral ceremonies of tɛndaanas and elders at Zubiuŋ, Ba'ari, Gbizug, and Wakii (the Talis clans contiguous with the Namoos) as well as among some of the non-Namoo clans of the Sie area. The Hill Talis attribute this to contamination by the customs of the Namoos. There are one or two rites which the plains Talis have and the Hill Talis lack altogether. There is, therefore, a broad distinction corresponding to the division between the clans that celebrate *Da'a* and those that celebrate *Bɔyaraam* as their Harvest Festival. But the two clusters overlap, as they do structurally, and the Talis overlap with the *tɛndaanditib* of the Sie area by the criterion of funeral customs as they do by those of locality and structure.

182 The funeral customs of the Talis, it is clear, are directly correlated with
184 the structure of the society. The broad patterns of doctrine and ritual
764 practice are the same for all Tallensi, and are an indication of their uniform culture and of a social structure which embraces all the Tallensi in a single system. More specific patterns of doctrine and practice are followed exclusively by the Talis and their congeners elsewhere in Taleland. They are an index of the structural differentiation of these clans from the Namoos. Some of these patterns are common to all or most of the Talis clans, and correspond therefore to the network of clanship and other structural ties linking them all to one another. Other specific patterns of funeral customs mark off lesser regions within the whole cluster of Talis clans. And finally, variations in detail correspond to the genealogical differentiation of clan from clan and lineage from lineage, and to the fact that each unit has a specific field of social relations not wholly congruent with that of any other unit of a like sort. The natives understand this. As we have noted before, they see variant ritual beliefs and practices of all kinds, and especially variant mortuary and funeral customs, as ways in which the corporate identity and the continuity of lineage and clan are expressed. They consider such variations within the limits of common patterns as belonging to the very fabric of their social organization.

Totemic Avoidances and Clanship Ties

784 The connexion between ritual observances and the social structure can
184 be even more plainly seen in the totemic avoidances of the Talis and the

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

other non-Namoos. It is recognized by all Tallensi that these taboos are on a par with the fowl taboo of the Namoos, though they have, in many respects, a more complex meaning. Among both groups of clans, no doubt because totemic taboos are so clear-cut and categorical, it is considered unthinkable for an adult in full command of his faculties to violate (*galəm*) a totemic taboo deliberately. The sanctions for an accidental breach are the same in both groups, but this is an extremely rare occurrence. It is enough to see the spontaneous repugnance of small children to unaccustomed or forbidden food to understand why they keep totemic taboos so conscientiously. A man never allows a prohibited animal into his house; and women married to men who may eat animals forbidden to themselves take scrupulous care to avoid a possible lapse. His totemic taboos appear to the individual as a simple, unequivocal moral precept.

Talis state their totemic avoidances in the form: 'We do not eat (*ti pu ɔbət*) or we taboo (*kih*) such and such an animal', meaning a particular species of animal. They explain that these avoidances are obligatory on a person through the fact of his being born a member of a certain maximal lineage; they are obligatory on both men and women from birth to death. Hence the wives of Talis have to refrain from eating animals prohibited to their husbands, though not to their own maximal lineages, when they have infants at the breast, or, in some clans, throughout their child-bearing period. For, as the natives explain, 'Food changes into milk', and the infant would be committing a sin indirectly. This problem does not arise amongst the Namoos, since all Tale women avoid eating the domestic fowl from the beginning of pubescence onwards. It is one of several food taboos observed by women with the utmost strictness, not for ritual reasons but purely as a matter of feminine propriety.

As with the Namoos, Talis totems and the totems of their congeners in the Sie area, are mythically validated, as we shall see presently. But like Namoos, Talis never express awe or reverence for a clan or lineage totem animal. It is an ordinary, commonplace creature devoid of anything in the nature of a halo of sacredness. They do not, for example, call a totem a sacred object (*bayər*). The emphasis is on the avoidance, the act of conduct as such. There is a notion of moral obligation in keeping the avoidance, but it is directed, as we shall see, to the ancestors and not to the totem animal in its own right.

Talis are not forbidden to kill an animal which is their totemic avoidance, though they would not wantonly do so. They may, and often do, catch these animals alive and sell them to people who are permitted to eat them; for many of these totem animals are considered to be great delicacies.

In one respect, however, the totemic avoidances of the Talis and their congeners differ from the fowl taboo of the Namoos. The former swear an oath by their totems, whereas the Namoos never invoke the fowl in this way. Like the Namoos, Talis can swear by the loin cover they put on their dead. The formula is the same as for the Namoos, with the substitution of the name of the animal whose skin is used: 'By my father and his sheep (or oribi) and his three cowrie shells.' This is a solemn oath, uttered in response to a serious accusation, in proof of one's innocence,

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

627 I was told. I have never heard it used by anybody, and this itself shows
184 how seriously it is taken.

618 The oath by the totem is not quite so serious a matter, though it could not be uttered with impunity. The formula is: '*Pakur ni nnuoni*—the tortoise and inside my mouth', if the totemic animal is the tortoise, or, in free translation: 'By the tortoise which I may not eat.' This oath might be used in trivial circumstances. Thus, if a man were wrongly accused of adultery he might swear by his father. But if he were accused of having appropriated something belonging to a friend or relative without permission, though admittedly without intending to steal it, he would swear to his innocence with an oath by his totem. It is the sort of oath, too, informants said, that one might use to assert one's truthfulness in an argument. A person who swears falsely by his totem would decline in health and begin to waste away (*burəm*), but he could probably be saved by atoning sacrifices. A person who swears one of the greater oaths, including the oath by one's father, falsely, will probably die. That is how the natives distinguish the degrees of sacredness they attach to these oaths. Again, I have never heard a totemic oath used, but I have discussed the matter with many people, both young and old, and their views are unanimous. Tallensi are reluctant to swear an oath except in an issue of real importance, and then they resort to the most solemn oath that is appropriate in the situation.

784 There is nothing secret about these totemic avoidances. Knowledge of them is public and widespread, though not always accurate where the totems of other clans than one's own are concerned. People become acquainted with the totemic avoidances of other clans through their ties of extra-clan kinship, and women spread the knowledge of the totemic avoidances of their paternal clans among the clans into which they marry. An amusing instance of the way in which this knowledge spreads occurred with one of my own boys. He was a Namoo, and one day bought a live water-tortoise from a Tenzugu youth. This is a great delicacy, but, as he told me afterwards, the cooking of it cost him almost more trouble than it was worth. For he had to cook it himself, out of doors in a borrowed pot, because his wife, a Tenzugu woman, was prohibited from eating this animal and refused to let him contaminate her kitchen or her cooking utensils with it.

It is never necessary for Tallensi to ask one another what their totemic avoidances are. When a person is required, for ritual reasons, to observe the taboos of another clan, the people of that clan who come to perform the rites that impose these taboos on him tell him about them. But one can ask a person, 'What do you (i.e. such and such a clan or lineage) taboo? (*ya kiha lani*)', or, 'What do you swear by? (*ya ɲota lani*)', in order to ascertain a group's totemic avoidances.

784 The animals most widely avoided among the Talis are the tortoise
184 (*pakur*) and the water tortoise (*miey*). Zubiuŋ, Gbizug, and most of the
618 Hill clans taboo both these animals. But there are several exceptions. None of the clans on the Degal side of the Hills keep these avoidances, nor do the people of Tamboog, and only the senior maximal lineage of the three constituent lineages of Soog has them. The people of Degal,

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

for example, avoid the squirrel (*sinsɛrəg*); the Tamboog people do not eat the dog (*baa*), the leopard (*yeogbaa*), the monkey (*ŋmaaŋ*), and the hare (*suoŋ*).

The majority of the clans which observe the two characteristic avoidances of the Talis have additional discriminatory totems. Zubiun has the cat (*sakoo*); at Wakii it is the snake (*waaf*), and this includes all species of snake, even the innocent little green *benɔrəg* which children of other clans kill and eat. A whole group of clans, including all that part of the network of linked lineages that connects Bunkiuk, Yinduur, Sii, and Gorogo, taboo the snake and the crocodile (*baŋ*) in addition to the land and water tortoises. Among these clans a snake that injures a domestic animal or a person is killed without hesitation, and if it is of an edible species, such as the python (*wayakpɛm*), it will be given to a friend or kinsman of a neighbouring clan which does not taboo snakes. This rule applies to all species of dangerous animals that serve as totems to a clan. If they injure mankind or man's property, they are transgressing (*galəm*) and deserve to be killed. This does not mean, however, that the Tallensi conceive of a special tie of friendship or kinship between a clan and its totem animals. But we shall come back to this point later.

Ba'ari and Yayazuor, with the exception of one accessory lineage, do not fall into the same circle of totemic avoidances. Their taboos vary from one maximal lineage to another. Thus, Ba'at-Sakpar taboos the dog and the hare; but Lakum yiri has no totemic avoidances.

When a clan or lineage has several totemic avoidances they are all considered to be of equal importance. In some situations the totems common to several clans are stressed, in others the natives draw attention to those which differentiate units among a number that have some common totems. There is no precise correlation between the ties of clanship and the distribution of totemic avoidances. Tamboog and Gundaat, closely allied as they are by ties of clanship, have different totemic avoidances. The constituent maximal lineages of clans like Soog and Ba'ari have no common totems, nor have the linked lineages of Zubiun and Ba'ari, or Soog and Sakpee. Conversely, common totemic avoidances do not by themselves indicate the existence of clanship ties. Ba'at-Sakpar has no clanship ties with Tamboog, though both taboo the dog and the hare, and the avoidance of the Degal people is found also among some clans of the Sie area which have no ties of clanship with Degal. It follows from this that (as among the Namoos) common totemic prohibitions are not a bar to marriage; lineage and clan exogamy operate in terms of clanship ties only.

On the other hand, clanship ties are in some instances associated with totemic avoidances. Dun biis of Ba'ari are said to observe the same avoidances as the Hill Talis, because they have clanship ties with Samiit. Alaa biis of Dkoog have the totemic taboos of Wakii, as well as those of Dkoog proper (a Namoo clan), because of their clanship ties with Wakii. Both these are attached lineages, whose descent is attributed to a son of a clan sister who had been married to a Samiit and a Wakii man respectively and had subsequently been divorced and sent back home with her children. The two lineages thus preserve the avoidances of what would

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

have been their founding ancestors' paternal clans. In other cases the correlation is not so clear, since the attached lineages concerned are intercalary between clans that have the same avoidances. But it is not a general rule that attached lineages preserve the avoidances of the clan of the alleged father of their founding ancestor, as can be seen from the case of Ba'at-Lakum yidem, who do not keep the Zubiuŋ taboos.

Thus Talis sometimes cite common totemic and other ritual observances as a sign of clanship ties, and at other times deny any necessary connexion between ritual observances and clanship ties. When they want to emphasize the close interdependence, or the sense of community of a particular group of clans, by contrast with other Talis or non-Talis clans, they tend to pick on common ritual observances in proof of this. But on the other hand, they are equally ready to quote peculiar totemic taboos as signs of the genealogical or social singularity of a clan or lineage. The apparent inconsistency does not worry them. For, as we have seen, Tallensi cannot visualize precisely the structure of their society in its entirety, and there is good evidence for both views in the ritual observances of the Talis. There is a tendency for some clans that are closely interconnected to have some totems in common, and for others to have different totems.

The totemic avoidances found among the clans of the Sie district in general follow the pattern found at Ba'ari; but in this area there is no close-knit nuclear aggregate of clans like the Hill Talis. The relative autonomy of the maximal lineage stands out more markedly, and there is consequently a greater diversity of totemic avoidances.

Totemic Myths

We have previously remarked that Namoos show little interest in the mythology of their totemic taboos. This attitude is characteristic of all Tallensi. Talis elders, whose authority and wisdom in ritual matters were widely respected, and who willingly gave me information of the most secret kind, were content to dismiss the question of the origin of their totemic taboos with some trite remark such as, 'We grew up to find it thus'. But here and there one comes across a myth accounting for the origin of a totemic taboo, especially in the Sie area. They are all expansions of the text 'The animal conferred a benefit on our ancestor (*u daa maal ti yaab la*)'. Though they all have the same moral, they vary greatly in substance.

Thus, according to one version, the avoidance of the tortoise and water-tortoise among the Hill Talis began in this way: 'Our (anonymous) ancestor' was suffering severely from thirst once and could find no water. He saw a tortoise crawling along and followed it. The animal reached a heap of dry leaves, which it scratched aside revealing a spring. Thereupon 'our ancestor' vowed that never again would he or his descendants eat the tortoise; and as the water-tortoise is merely another species of the same family, this taboo naturally extends to it as well.

According to another version, which is worth quoting as an example of the variations in these myths, 'our ancestor' was on a journey and was

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

basis, for instance, of their technique of divination, which depends on rapid and spontaneous inference from stereotyped signs and symbols.

These myths provide yet another illustration of the indifference of the Tallensi to the origins of their customs. The emphasis in their culture is on conduct, not on creed; on performance rather than on doctrine. At the same time, these myths express, as we have previously noted, the basic postulate of Tale philosophy—that the ancestors are the *fons et origo* of their whole social order—and they show also how the natives visualize their totemic taboos as symbols of the moral and ritual bonds imposed by agnatic descent.

The Totemic Avoidances of the Talis as a Reflex of the Social Structure

We can now resume our analysis of the relationship of Talis ritual observances to the social structure. We have considered certain funeral rites and totemic avoidances as the chief indices of structural differentiation. We have seen that they are not, as the natives sometimes imply, hard-and-fast criteria. They mark off the Talis cluster from the Namoos in a broad way, but reflect the overlapping between them which our study of the clanship system has brought out. And among the Talis themselves, though there is a considerable congruence between genealogical grouping as determined by the canon of agnatic descent and distinctive ritual observances, it is not a one-to-one relationship.

The funeral customs and totemic taboos we have reviewed have one feature in common which helps to explain why the natives think of them as indices of social differentiation. They are tied to the agnatic line, passed on from father to child just like membership of the lineage. They owe their binding force to the fact that they were, according to native belief, instituted by the ancestors of the lineage or clan. Hence arises a significant common element, the oath associated with the observance. Breach of the ritual observance or using the oath falsely is blasphemy against the ancestors.

We pick up this thread again in another sphere of the ritual system of the Talis. It is a common opinion in Taleland that the taboos against eating the tortoise and water-tortoise are specially characteristic of the Hill Talis. And the reason always given for this is that these taboos are connected with the Talis cult of the External *Bɔɣar*. Among the Hill Talis, if a child transgresses the taboo (*galɔm kihɔr*) by eating of the forbidden animal, its father 'pays' (*yɔ*) a fowl to the External *Bɔɣar* of which his clan is an adherent. The fowl is sacrificed at the *Bɔɣar*, with apologies for the transgression and pleas for the child's future well-being. A fine is thus paid to annul the trespass, and the smallness of the fine is evidence that the trespass is not considered serious.

As a rule, the group of clans and maximal lineages forming the congregation of a particular External *Bɔɣar* all have the same avoidances. Thus, all the units that owe ritual allegiance to Bona'ab, the External *Bɔɣar* of Kpata'ar and its associated lineages, taboo the tortoise and the water-tortoise. Hence, individuals who are the spiritual wards of Bona'ab may not eat these animals, and, if they belong to other clans or other

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

tribes with different taboos, they must observe these in addition to the taboos of their own clan. One segment of Samiit, which also belongs to this congregation, is prohibited in addition from eating the snake, so a supplicant coming to the *Bɔɣar* sponsored by Samiit must refrain also from eating the snake. Wannii, another well-known External *Bɔɣar* in the Hills, includes in its congregation only clans and lineages which taboo the snake and crocodile as well as the tortoise and water-tortoise. Hence, children of strangers who are the spiritual wards of this *Bɔɣar* must avoid all four animals. Clans and lineages that have atypical totems also have independent External *Bɔɣa*.

Among the Hill Talis, then (and this applies also to the people of Zubiuŋ and Gbeog), common totems generally indicate membership of the same External *Bɔɣar* congregation. This means that the clans and lineages concerned are subject to common ritual sanctions in terms of the ancestor cult, embodied in common cult objects and ceremonies. It implies obligatory bonds of amity and interdependence on the politico-ritual plane, prohibiting recourse to arms, for example, as a means of redressing wrongs between member lineages of the same congregation, or acts of hostility such as the abduction of a fellow member's wife, though he may not be a kinsman. It implies formal duties of member lineage to member lineage in funeral ceremonies; and it creates a feeling of belonging together, of spontaneous goodwill towards one another, among the member lineages, which even the bitter political dissensions of to-day have not altogether destroyed. Belonging to the same religious community in itself connotes social ties analogous to those of clanship.

The *Bɔɣar* cult resembles other forms of ritual observance tied to the notion of descent in that there is an oath associated with it. It emphasizes the key idea of the cult, the dominance of the collective ancestors, as we shall see shortly. For that matter, this idea is the main theme of all the rites and doctrines of the cult—the initiation of youths by 'handing them over to their ancestors' as the Talis put it; the Harvest and Sowing Festivals; and no less in such minor things as entrusting a recalcitrant wife, the source of future descendants, to the *Bɔɣar* or the coercion of an adulterous wife by means of it.

But before we deal with these points, an aspect of the *Bɔɣar* cult to which we have previously referred must be further discussed. An External *Bɔɣar* can become the spirit-guardian (*sɛɣɔr*) of an individual. An ancestor spirit who becomes a person's spirit-guardian is defined in native religious doctrine as 'He who has my life in his keeping so that I exist (*ɔn m-mar n-ŋovor ka mbɛ*)', and the ward (*sɛɣɔraan*) must keep the totemic avoidances of the *Bɔɣar* community. This applies particularly to non-Talis (Mamprusi, Dagomba, Bulisi, and others) who come as pilgrims to the *Bɔɣar* to supplicate for children. The special bonds of ritual dependence thus created include both the parents and the children born, as the natives believe, in answer to their prayers. The Hill Talis themselves keep the avoidances whether or not they are personally the wards of the *Bɔɣar*; for, as they put it, they are all *ipso facto* under its spiritual guardianship.

If a stranger pilgrim has a child in answer to his prayers, his first duty

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

776 788 is to pay over the gifts and sacrifices he has promised the *Bɔyar* in return. Later, when the child is old enough to travel, it is brought to the *Bɔyar* to be ritually dedicated to it and named, and thus brought into communion with it. Wards of the *Bɔyar* have prescribed names according to [551] their order of birth. First-borns are always Tɔŋ or Bɔyare; later children have names compounded of these two names and suffixes indicative of sex or birth order—Tɔndoog or Tɔnpɔk or Tanzoo, and so forth. A girl [582] ward must remain chaste until she marries; and when she is given in marriage she has to be released from this bond by means of gifts and sacrifices to the *Bɔyar* before she goes to her husband.

769 648 574 The ritual dominion of the Hill Talis' External *Bɔya* extends, also, to whole clans and lineages of non-Tale tribes as we shall see later. Here it is enough to mention that every External *Bɔyar* of the Hill Talis has a traditional network of client lineages and clans among the adjacent non-Tale tribes, the Mamprusi, Dagomba, Bulisi, Woolisi, and even Mossi; and nowadays also in Ashanti and the Colony. Every year, at the time of the Harvest Festivals, these client lineages send messengers with gifts and sacrifices to the *Bɔyar* to which they adhere, to give thanks for the benefits of the past year and to pray for good crops, good health, peace, and offspring during the coming year. Client lineages also observe the totemic and other ritual rules of the *Bɔyar*. From time to time reciprocal visits are paid to the client lineages by representatives of the Hill Talis [609] lineages that sponsor them before the *Bɔyar*. These visitors, coming as emissaries of the *Bɔyar*, are received with the hospitality due to honoured kinsmen and travel long distances in hostile country under the safe conduct of their client associates without danger. It is chiefly from its client lineages that pilgrims come to a particular *Bɔyar*.

● 784 776 184 The personal totemic avoidances of wards of a Talis *Bɔyar* are instances of a more general rule. It often happens that a child's spirit-guardian is a matrilateral ancestor or ancestress, its father's maternal grandfather, for instance. Then the ward (*sɛyɔraan*) is obliged to observe the totemic avoidances which were held by his spirit-guardian during the latter's lifetime. He must do so, according to native doctrine, because he will have to offer sacrifices throughout his lifetime to his spirit-guardian; and as a sacrifice is an act of communion, both between the living, and between the living and the dead, he would be unable either to offer or to partake of sacrifices to his spirit-guardian if he did not keep the latter's taboos. Thus he would nullify the bond of mystical tutelage and lay himself open to inevitable disasters. He would also gravely damage his relations with the agnatic descendants of his spirit-guardian, upon whom falls the duty of maintaining the cult of the latter's spirit and whom he will sometimes have to join in sacrifice. There are many people among the Namoos who observe Talis taboos for this reason, and many Talis who avoid both the totems of their own clan and those of other clans as well. The fowl taboo of the Namoos is an exception to this rule, for the obvious reason that it is restricted to first-born children. Even if a man had to avoid the fowl in his lifetime, it ceases to be relevant after his death, and is no longer remembered by his descendants. But the rule does apply to the ancillary totems of those Namoo clans and lineages that have any, such as the

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

leopard taboo of Dkoog; for these taboos are of the same class as those of the Talis.

An individual's avoidance of his matrilateral spirit-guardian's totems is, of course, an avoidance of the totems of the latter's lineage. They are the people who have the custody of the shrine at which sacrifices must be offered to the *sɛyər* spirit; their mediation is essential for a correct relationship between ward and spirit-guardian. It is with them, the living members of the spirit-guardian's lineage, that the ward shares the communion of sacrifice, and this is the fundamental condition for preserving the mystical goodwill of the *sɛyər*. On the same principle, a person given as ward to a Talis *Bɔyar* would be precluded from sacrificing to the *sɛyər*, that is from sharing in the communion of sacrifice with the members of the *Bɔyar* congregation through whom alone ritual access can be gained to the *Bɔyar*, if he does not observe their totemic avoidances. This is the symbol of the unique religious and moral bond between them. There are other ways, too, in which a matrilateral ancestor can be endowed with direct and permanent ritual efficacy for a man. Such a spirit may become (*naam*) his divining spirit (*bakologo*) or his Destiny (*yin*). Then he will have to call upon this ancestor's agnatic descendants to come and consecrate a shrine to the spirit at his house. He will have to sacrifice to this spirit and share the communion of sacrifice with the spirit's agnatic descendants. Therefore, he, too, must respect the totems of this matrilateral ancestor's lineage.

We see, therefore, that an individual can have private totemic observances not shared by other members of his lineage or clan. Like clan totems, however, they become obligatory on him in virtue of a particular tie of descent. Superficially, they can be understood as emblems of this tie and of the living kinship ties that flow from it. But there is more to it than this, as we see from the totemic bond between stranger wards of an External *Bɔyar* and the *Bɔyar* congregation.

The stranger ward and his parents are not kinsmen of the lineage that sponsors them. But they do acquire a relationship of what might be called quasi-kinship with their sponsors and a ritual bond with the *Bɔyar* which carries social duties and religious obligations equivalent to those of adherents by descent of the *Bɔyar*. These relationships are based on the fact that stranger pilgrims establish a line of descent through the mystical aid of the *Bɔyar*. It is, as the natives put it, 'because it is on his (the *Bɔyar's*) account that we have begotten children'.

Similarly, the association of totemic and other ritual observances with lineage and clanship groupings is seen to have a wider significance when the client lineages of Hill Talis *Bɔya* are brought into the picture. The ties between client lineages and the true member lineages of the *Bɔyar* to which they owe ritual allegiance may be called quasi-clanship, to sum up the native interpretation of the relationship in one word.

Totemic Taboos and the Patrilineal Principle

We have endeavoured to keep the information adduced in the preceding pages down to the minimum necessary for our argument. It is enough, however, to justify the conclusion that the ritual observances we have

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

extra or exceptional avoidances usually consider them to be more distinctive of themselves, though not more important, than the general taboos. In other words, these avoidances emphasize the relative autonomy of the maximal lineage in opposition to the coherence of the ideological community; and this is the more conspicuous the farther away from the centre a clan is located.

It is significant, however, that clans with additional or exceptional totems are not considered to be the less Talis for that reason. The people of Degal, for instance, who belong to the central cluster of Hill Talis, claim to be 'Talaŋ' *par excellence* in virtue of their supposed descent from the primordial, earth-begotten tendaana of the Hills. It is a question of degree, the primacy of lineage membership being relatively stressed in the totemic avoidances of the deviant clans, the interdependence of corporate units in the greater aggregate being relatively stressed by most other Talis. From the point of view of the Hill Talis, there are, as we have learnt, two levels of interdependence amongst the Talis. There is the interdependence of the Hill clans *inter se*, focused in the External *Bɔyar* cult, which extends as far as Zubiuŋ; and there is the interdependence of all the Talis—and in fact of Talis and Namoos—in the wider politico-ritual synthesis which emerges most conspicuously in the cycle of the Great Festivals. The clans associated in the narrower synthesis all tend to have the tortoise and the water-tortoise taboos; the clans associated only in the wider synthesis tend to have taboos stressing their genealogical autonomy; Zubiuŋ and Gbizug, which form the transition region, as it were, between the narrow association and the wide association, observe the tortoise and water-tortoise taboos, but do not consider them to be as distinctive of themselves as their special avoidances.

But this, we must not forget, is not the whole story. Totemic taboos, funeral rites, and *Bɔyar* ritual are symbols. What they symbolize is the body of moral and ritual norms correlated to each of the three zones of social relations we have been considering—the norms which are the organizing values of lineage, clan, and ritual community. As these rest, in the final count, on the mystical supremacy of the ancestor spirits, we can say summarily that these ritual observances symbolize the ancestors in the various aspects under which they govern social and individual life among the Talis.

The Significance of Animals as Totems

The totemic avoidances of the Tallensi all refer to animals, and it may well be asked if they have any common characteristics or outstanding peculiarities from the native point of view. Totemic avoidances of the type we have recorded are found throughout Voltaic culture; in fact, they are a notable feature of social organization among all the negroid peoples of the western Sudan. Not only is their pattern the same throughout this region, but the animal species most commonly prohibited are the same, and the myths accounting for the taboos have the same form.[1] To

[1] Cf. for example, the reference to the *Tne* among the Bambara, in Monteil, Charles, op. cit. 134–5.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

speak only of the Voltaic area, the animal species referred to above occur among the totemic avoidances of people as remote from the Tallensi, both spatially and linguistically, as the Isala and the Lobi,[1] as well as among all the other 'tribes' of the area.

Confining ourselves to Taleland and to the settlements of Gorisi fringing this area, we find that the totemic avoidances include birds like the canary (*wurəg*), the turtle-dove (*dayman*), the domestic fowl (*noo*), and several other species; reptiles, like the snake, the tortoise, the water-tortoise, and the crocodile; fish, like the *tunəg*; insects, like the large grasshopper (*saŋkaan*); rodents, like the squirrel (*sinsɛrəg*) and the hare (*suoŋ*); ruminants, like the goat (*buu*) and the sheep (*pchug*); carnivores, such as the cat (*sakoo*), the dog (*baa*), and the leopard (*yeogbaa*); and a variety of other animals, such as the monkey (*ŋmaaŋ*) and the bush-pig (*dee*).[2]

It is impossible to find any common trait amongst this variety of creatures. Some play an important part in the economic life and the food-supply of the natives, but the majority are negligible in this respect. Many are prized as delicacies by those who are permitted to eat them; and, on the other hand, some are despised as food. No adult would willingly eat grasshoppers, canaries, or small edible snakes, though little children, who eat almost any small animals they can lay their hands on, quite often do so. Several of these animal species are regarded as always potentially dangerous in the magical as well as the physical sense. Such are the crocodile, snakes, the leopard, and other wild carnivores. But many, on the contrary, are entirely innocent both in the magical and the physical sense. Some have a place in the meagre folk-lore of the Tallensi, including such diverse creatures as the monkey, the turtle-dove, and the cat. Cats, for instance, are considered to be pre-eminently the domestic companions of women, but with a streak of the wild animal in them. Women treat them with a mixture of solicitude, appropriate to a valued pet, and of pseudo-ritual respect that meets with good-humoured ridicule from the men. Incidentally, clans that have the cat as a totem show no particular respect towards household cats, nor are household dogs treated differently by people who may and people who may not eat the dog.

The totemic animals of the Tallensi thus comprise neither a zoological nor a utilitarian nor a magical class. All that can be said of them is that

[1] For the Isala and other 'tribes' of the Voltaic area, see Rattray, op. cit. His report on the Isala is in vol. ii, pp. 465 ff. For the Lobi, see ib., vol. ii, pp. 425 ff., and Labouret, op. cit., pp. 227 ff. Rattray does not distinguish clearly between the different kinds of ritual prohibitions and injunctions coupled with patrilineal descent, some of which are not totemic in the sense we have given to this term. But his observations and those of Labouret confirm the conclusion that there is no precise correlation between these avoidances and clanship ties. Labouret's account of the attitudes and values associated with totemic avoidances among the Lobi shows them to resemble closely those of the Tallensi.

[2] Rattray's list for this area, op. cit., vol. i, p. 236, includes also several big-game animals, such as the roan (*koo*), hartebeest (*scbəg*), bush-cow (*yeognaaf*), and elephant (*wɔbəg*), as well as the lion (*gbiaymər*), the hyena (*gbiŋgbɛr*), and the hippo (*emər*). But here, as elsewhere in the book, Rattray appears to have lumped together ritual observances that are similar in form though not in function, and he does not state clearly what clans or settlements hold particular taboos.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

they are generally fairly common domestic or wild creatures. We have shown that the totemic avoidances of the Tallensi have a symbolic value in relation to their social organization. They are not, however, explicable simply as a function of the social structure. We cannot dismiss the choice of animal symbolism for this function as an accident of history or as mere coincidence. To understand it we should have to probe more deeply into the religious beliefs not only of the Tallensi but of all the peoples of this culture area. Animal and food taboos play a very important part in the ritual symbolism of Voltaic culture and indeed of West African cultures in general. We have repeatedly emphasized the intrinsic relation of the religious system of the Tallensi to their social structure. In a social system such as theirs, ritual ideas and values and the morphology of the society are interrelated as mind and body in the higher primates. But these two aspects of Tale society are not merely the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Though Tale religion springs directly out of the social structure, it is fed by streams whose sources lie beneath and beyond the social structure. We cannot pursue this theme here in detail, for it leads to problems of Tale psychology, and indeed of human psychology, that lie outside the scope of this study. We can only give an indication of the line such an enquiry would take. To do this we must consider some other forms of animal symbolism that appear in Tale religious beliefs.

Taboos of the Earth

Animals of all kinds can be endowed with ritual significance for individuals or groups among the Tallensi. They become sacred objects (*baɣa*, sing. *bayər*) forming part of shrines (*baɣa*, sing. *bayər*) dedicated to named ancestor spirits, on which sacrifices are offered. A *bayər* animal is an individual animal or a species found in a particular place. Totem animals are not *baɣa*, since they are whole species respected everywhere and not associated with particular shrines.

Certain 'taboos of the Earth' (*tɛŋən kiha*) form a class of animal taboos standing between *baɣa* in the narrow sense and totems. Some Earth taboos are universal. Thus, throughout the Voltaic region it is a taboo to appropriate any unclaimed object of iron found lying on the ground. Other Earth taboos are specific to localities coming under the ritual jurisdiction of particular clans or lineages. All over Taleland large reptiles such as the crocodile (*baŋ*), the python (*waɣakpɛm*), the tree- and water-lizards (*wuk* and *wuu*) are taboos of the Earth. They may not be killed within the precincts of any important Earth shrine. In the bush, where men have no social bonds with the land, and therefore no ritual bonds with the Earth at specific places, they are not sacred. Binding on everybody, these taboos hold with extra force for members of lineages that have tɛndaanas (see also pp. 187–8 below).

Tallensi say these animals are 'the people of the Earth (*tɛŋən nirəba*)' as men are people of such and such a settlement. They symbolize the mystical power of the Earth as it acts on human life, sometimes beneficently, sometimes punitively. This is what the natives mean when they say 'The Earth is a living thing (*tɛŋ la a bonvor*)'.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

and her sons might have been able to exercise all the rights and duties of clanship. There is, in fact, a submerged feeling of rivalry in the relations between the men of the clan and the *pɔɣayabəlis*, deprived by an accident of birth of effective jural and ritual membership of the clan. This is shown, for example, in a curious taboo affecting the oldest living *pɔɣayabələg* of a maximal lineage. She may never spend a night in the homestead of the head of the maximal lineage, even if he is her own brother. If she did, either or both of them would die. For the lineage ancestors abide in this homestead, and they object to her presence there simultaneously with that of their proper male custodian. The natives, of course, simply state this taboo as a fact, but to anyone familiar with Tale culture the interpretation is obvious. The senior *pɔɣayabələg* might, in her own person, have been the head of the lineage but for the accident of birth. Her presence in the homestead which she might have occupied as a man is a hidden challenge and reproach both to the male head of the lineage and to the ancestors. It would be tantamount to a symbolic rejection of the fundamental principles of the lineage organization. For these reasons she cannot stay with the man who most conspicuously represents the extrusion of women from the full heritage of patrilineal descent.

Institutionalized Recognition of a Clanswoman's Status

There are many institutions in which the status of the *pɔɣayabələg* as an intrinsic element in the lineage organization is recognized. For example, a new-born child is confined to its father's house for some months. When it is big enough to be allowed out of doors it must be ritually taken out for the first time by a *pɔɣayabələg* of the clan. Usually she is a near agnate of the father, but any clanswoman may be asked to carry out the rite. The child's father consults a diviner to find out who will be a suitable *pɔɣayabələg*; for the rite is implicitly a blessing of the ancestors, and it is they who are believed to appoint a woman of the clan to carry their blessing to the child. It can be surmised that a *pɔɣayabələg* is chosen for this rite because she is by birth identified with the child's father and its lineage, and by sex identified with the child's mother and the function of motherhood. Taking the child out of the house is in part a question of maternal care, therefore a woman's task; it is also a step that involves the child's physical and spiritual well-being. Outside the walls of the homestead lie greater dangers, both material and mystical, than inside the homestead, and this is the concern of the child's patrilineal ancestors.

The role of *pɔɣayabəlis* in relation to the lineage *bɔɣar* is significant in this connexion. A woman cannot become the custodian of an ancestor shrine, except nominally if she is the sole survivor of a lineage. In that case she cannot sacrifice to the shrine directly, but must call in a collateral male agnate to deputize for the man who might have been the custodian of the shrine. This is the most important distinction between the status of male members and that of female members of the lineage, and it is a consequence of the fact that women do not help to maintain the continuity of the lineage. Nevertheless, *pɔɣayabəlis* have the right to take part

793 471 one who was human (*vor*) becomes a spirit (*kpiim*). For this service, too, the tendaana receives only prescribed portions of the sacrificial animals. If [311] a man wants to break virgin land for cultivation, he requires the consent [175] of the tendaana in whose *tey* the land lies. Unless the tendaana comes to cut the boundaries (*kie*) of the farm, its cultivation will bring nothing but disaster on the farmer. The tendaana's reward is, again, only a portion of the sacrifices and occasional gifts of grain in subsequent years. Lastly, there are the circumstances in which a tendaana must be called upon to [682 make peace between man and the Earth. The weightiest of these is in the 782] case of blood shed in strife, whether the victim dies or not. Atonement sacrifices must be offered by both parties through the tendaana of the *tey* where the blood was shed, and, in clans that have the tendaanaship, [673 through their own tendaanas as well. There are also less heinous sacrileges 782] and even venial sins—such as wearing cloth garments near certain *tɔŋgbana*—for which small atonement sacrifices must be offered through the tendaana; and there are some minor accidents which must be ritually cancelled out by a sacrifice to the Earth. If a house burns down, for example, it is thought of as a quasi-mystical disaster, like a failure of one's crops, and the fire must be ritually 'quenched' by the tendaana, after it has been physically put out.

793 471 [511] For all these ritual services, which tendaanas regard both as duties that can be neglected only at peril of life and as rights indicating their status and ritual jurisdiction, no payment is given other than portions of the sacrifices. To people with the standard of living of the Tallensi the value of such perquisites is by no means negligible. It is a common saying that all tendaanas are gluttons and that they are never short of meat. Cynics say that the office of tendaana is coveted for the meat it brings in. We must remember, however, that when we speak of a tendaana here it would be more appropriate to speak of a tendaana and his lineage or clan. For a tendaana can and frequently does send one or more of his clansmen to deputize for him and sometimes even delegates some of his duties to cognates not of his clan; and the rewards of his services must be shared with them and with his close agnates.

793 784 291 Certain taboos of the Earth are obligatory on all tendaanas. Thus it is a taboo for cloth garments to be worn in the vicinity of any of the important *tɔŋgbana* like Doo or of the homesteads of all except a few tendaanas. My clothing was a constant embarrassment to tendaanas even after they had resigned themselves to my European shortcomings. As tendaanas can never lay aside their priestly bonds with the Earth, they may never wear cloth. Instead, they wear dressed skins of domestic or wild ungulates. A tendaana dressed in his finest skins on a solemn occasion has an appearance of hieratic dignity that is most impressive.

793 784 779 There are also, as we have learnt (cf. p. 142), local *tey* taboos obligatory on everybody who lives on that *tey*, and serving to mark it off from other *tes*. Among the commonest are the prohibition against using red ochre (*tandayanze'e*) for plastering the homestead or grass for roofing it, and the taboos against killing certain reptiles. In the observance of these taboos, as in their compliance with all the obligations and observances connected with the Earth, Tallensi are extremely conscientious. In consequence,

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

his ritual powers and duties give a tɛndaana very great prestige and considerable moral authority over people living on his *tɛŋ* whether or not they belong to his clan. At Tongo, for instance, the Gbizug tɛndaana is spoken of and treated with a respect little short of reverence, both in the formal interclan politico-ritual relations and in commonplace relations of everyday life. 'He owns the land (*ɔn nso tɛŋ la*)', Tongo people say gravely, 'we are strangers here. We only grow our millet here to feed ourselves. If we offend the tɛndaana he can drive us away from here.' The last part of this statement is not literally true. A tɛndaana cannot drive people off their ancestral dwelling and farm-land; to say the least it would be ethically evil. It is not legal but ritual action that the statement implies. I have seen a tɛndaana's curse throw a person into a state of anxiety that persisted for days, until a reconciliation was effected. But this was anxiety concerning the mystical consequences of the tɛndaana's curse, without any assumption as to its jural implications. The term 'owner' applied to a chief or tɛndaana, as we have stated earlier, is simply a means of subsuming in one concept the configuration of rights and duties, privileges and obligations which defines the relations of a community with its politico-ritual heads in reference to its local framework and to the common values symbolized in ritual doctrine and practice. The material earth and the mystical Earth meet in the functions of tɛndaanas.

Many Tallensi are able to formulate the distinction between the earth in its physical, utilitarian aspect and the Earth in its ritual manifestations. But in general the distinction is inherent in the economic and politico-ritual institutions of the natives rather than expressed in explicit doctrine or language. Whenever or wherever the concept *tɛŋ* comes up it tends to be ambiguous. It suggests both aspects of the earth, though the major emphasis may be on one or the other. It is as if neither aspect of the earth can appear without the other following like its shadow.

This holds particularly with the *tɛndaanditib* clans. Their ritual bonds with their *tɛ́ɛ* form a halo around their utilitarian relations with the earth. In most of these clans, therefore, it is a taboo of the Earth to sell parcels of land. To sell farm-land (*kuo*) is like selling pieces of the mystical *tɛŋ* to which they are bound by the strongest ties of interest, emotion, and values. Namoo clans which do not have tɛndaanas do not feel this strong and direct tie with their *tɛŋ* in its mystical aspect. The utilitarian, material aspect of the earth falls apart from its mystical counterpart more easily for them. Hence it is mostly in such communities that farm-land is sold. But even Namoos say that the earth as such, the *tɛŋ*, cannot be sold. In practice the sale of farm-land is a sale of usufructuary rights and is confined to clansmen or kinsmen as we know. It is, always, a transaction between men who are bound to one another by the fundamental common and mutual interests of Tale collective life. Men cannot buy land in a Tale settlement in which they have no kin. In this, as in other aspects of their relationship towards locality, the Namoos put the major emphasis on the coherence of the community as this is focused in the chiefship. And fundamentally the coherence of the community is as indivisible as the continuity of territory. The Chief of Tongo, for example, exercises an ever-present influence on the prosperity and welfare of the members

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of his own sub-clan. This is the central field of integrated social relations pivoting on this chiefship. But his ritual status also affects the prosperity and welfare of Zubiuŋ and Zoo directly and that of the Hill Talis indirectly. In fact, in the last resort, it affects all the clans of Taleland that have a place in the cycle of the Great Festivals. 'The community (*teŋ*) cannot be subdivided (*bɔk*)', the Chief of Tongo once told me in explanation of the ritual significance of his office. Famine, pestilence, war cannot be dammed and confined to one place. And so if the Chief of Tongo dies the whole country suffers, though his own clan will perhaps suffer most and the remoter zones of his politico-ritual influence least.

The bonds between man and land, community and locality that are so fundamental in the structure of Tale society cannot be understood apart from this context of ritual values and moral norms. Difficult as they are to grasp and pin down in exact language, they are as ever present to the native's mind as his sentiment of attachment to his native soil. They cause men who have been away from home for many years to give up splendid farms in Mampurugu or good jobs in Kumasi to return to take up their patrimonial land.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

homestead accompanied often by the family head's old mother. This is the usual history of the independent elementary family in Taleland; and about 1 in 8 of the domestic families of our sample have this constitution. Often, however, when a man secedes from the joint family he already has more than one wife, though his children are all still under marriageable age. Polygynous domestic families of this class occur in about the same proportion—1 in 8—in the sample. And thus the cycle begins again. As the children grow up and marry, each fraction of the dismembered joint family evolves into a new joint family, or at least has the possibility of doing so.

A joint family splits up—into family segments, be it noted, not into a number of dispersed individuals—if it has existed long enough to have reached an advanced stage of internal differentiation; but during its existence it is a remarkably cohesive unit. The fissiparous tendencies inherent in its structure are kept well in check until the pressure of economic needs, psychological friction, or a radical alteration in the constellation of the social relations, such as occurs when the family head dies, makes them irresistible. The split follows the lines of cleavage inherent in the structure of the effective minimal lineage on which a particular joint family is founded, and it takes place by stages.

We shall study the process of fission in the joint family later. Here only the results concern us. The simplest split occurs when the oldest son of the family head 'goes out on his own (*yi u kɔkɔ*)',[1] or 'cuts his own gateway (*bit u zanɔr*)' in the family homestead, during his father's lifetime. He thus sets up an independent household, though perhaps living in a semi-detached part of the paternal homestead. But when the old man dies, he frequently returns to the parental home, and the joint family is reconstituted under his authority.

Permanent fission usually occurs between brothers (full, or half-brothers, or paternal cousins), or by the secession of the family head's deceased brother's sons. It begins, and may persist until the family head's death, as a purely economic division. Thus two full (*soog*) brothers—the older being the family head—may decide to farm independently because the growing economic wants of their respective families no longer permit them to maintain a common household. The bond of full brotherhood (*soog*) inhibits further fission altogether, or until such time as both men have adult children. Until then they generally continue to occupy the same homestead, using a single common gateway, cattle-yard (*sapak*), and *zɔŋ*. Their respective sections of the

[1] The intra-family tensions which lead to the 'going out' of the eldest son will be discussed later. They are rationalized, and the secession of the eldest son is given a mystical sanction by the taboo which, among the Namoos, forbids a man ever meeting his first-born adult son face to face in his gateway after the latter has a family of adolescent children. Non-Namoos do not have the taboo, but the beliefs expressed in it are as strong among them as among the Namoos. Cf. below, Ch. VIII.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

considering this situation more closely as it will give us a further insight into the working of the classificatory principle.

The simplest and clearest index to it is in certain observances at the funeral of any man of one's father's generation. A man whose 'father' is alive may not perform the principal rites such as the killing of the goat or sheep from which the loin-cover for the corpse will be cut, or the rites of 'entering the *zɔŋ*'; and he may not eat the ceremonial food associated with or consumed in these rites. To infringe these taboos is not only an insult to one's 'father' but a sin, since it is equivalent to wishing him dead. There are men whose proxy or classificatory fathers are alive who know more about ritual matters than their seniors. I have seen such men stand by and direct others in the performance of funeral rites which they themselves are forbidden to carry out. I have seen them raging with exasperation at the incompetence of the old men or women who were carrying out the rites; but they would have been shocked at the suggestion that it would save temper and trouble if they performed the rites themselves.

Again, the application of the notion varies relatively to the dimensions of the lineage involved in a particular situation and the whole constellation of classificatory kinship recognized within it. At one extreme stand matters that concern only the members of the nuclear lineage. That would be the case, for example, if the nuclear lineage assembled to make a sacrifice to its immediate founding ancestor. Thus, to take a lineage we have met in an earlier chapter, if Katiŋoo biis meet to sacrifice to Katiŋoo, only his grandsons and great-grandsons are concerned (see genealogy on p. 68). In such a situation the two patri-segments of Katiŋoo biis (Duun biis and Baa biis) are each formally recognized as a separate unit and the sacrificial meat is divided equally between them. If Ɔmara were dead, the share due to his patri-segment would fall to his sons; and they would, in this context, say that they have no father. They are, in fact, through the eldest son, taking the place of their father in intra-lineage relations; their status is no longer submerged in that of their father. They are thinking in terms of the contraposition of the two component patri-segments of the lineage. Within the limits of the nuclear lineage, the term 'father' (*ba*) means own father and a man whose own father is dead has no father. He speaks of his proxy-fathers (father's brothers and cousins) as his *ba-pirib*, junior fathers, or *ba-biernam*, senior fathers.

The higher the segmentary order of the lineage involved, the wider is the application of this notion. If the situation involves the inner lineage, then the nuclear lineage emerges as the smallest corporate unit recognized. This happens in sacrifices to the founding ancestor of the inner lineage or in certain funeral customs where food contributions are made by the head of the nuclear lineage on behalf of the whole unit. In this case a man whose own father is dead but whose father's brother

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

613 602 or father's father's brother's son is still alive would not claim to be fatherless. For, in matters where the nuclear lineage acts as a unit in relation to other like units, he has no independent status. The unit is under the authority of a 'father' and a 'son's' status is submerged in the 'father's'. Similarly, if the lineage involved is a medial lineage, the smallest sub-segments recognized will be its component inner lineages. Then a man will only claim to be fatherless if he has no 'father' alive within the inner lineage to which he belongs. Beyond this range—for example where the unit of corporate action is a maximal lineage in which the smallest sub-segments recognized are the medial lineages—the question usually does not arise. At this range generation differences no longer count.

This is a schematic formulation, for there is always a margin of flexibility depending both on the internal structure of the unit concerned and on such adventitious factors as the personal relations of the men who are involved and the character of the situation. Continuity of person-to-person relationships in the routine affairs of the lineage and family help to keep appropriate kinship distances alive. A describes B as his 'father' because he knows that his natural father C during his lifetime always spoke of B as his 'brother'. But human memory is fallible, and in doubtful cases Tallensi take the line of greatest personal advantage consonant with existing structural arrangements.

613 593 We shall understand it better if we consider a few examples of how the notion of being fatherless influences behaviour in practice. At Soog one of the component maximal lineages of the clan comprises two major segments which function as medial lineages in corporate affairs. Each of these segments is represented by its head at ceremonies at the External *Bɔyar* of Soog. When Sɛbəg, the head of one of these segments, died, the most senior remaining member of the unit was his 18-year-old son, Bɔyabil, who therefore succeeded to the headship of the segment. Shortly after Sɛbəg's death an important sacrifice was performed at the External *Bɔyar*. The beer used for the preliminary libations was being shared among the elders and a calabashful was passed to Bɔyabil. The youth shook his head in refusal. 'No, drink,' said one of the elders, 'it is a taboo. You are an elder now, not a child.' Up till then Bɔyabil had been prohibited from drinking this beer, as no one who has a father alive may drink of it.

● [784]

782 593 [784] Another incident on this same occasion was equally revealing. Certain of the fowls slaughtered in sacrifices to an External *Bɔyar* are known as 'tabooed fowls (*nɔkiha*)'. They may not be touched, let alone eaten, by anyone who has a father alive. A man inadvertently handed one of these birds to Diŋkaha's son. Noticing this, Diŋkaha burst into a tirade against the man. 'Do you wish to cause my death or my son's death?' he cried.

593 In both these instances to be fatherless meant to have no natural

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

613 428 Kutəbis also inherited the lineage *bɔŋar* of Pa'anbəbis biis, of which nuclear lineage he and his sons and brother's sons form a segment. Again, this might have gone to the head of the other segment of Pa'anbəbis biis if he had been senior by generation or age to Kutəbis. With this *bɔŋar* goes some land at the now abandoned site of Pa'anbəbis's homestead. If on Kutəbis's death the present head of Baŋanlərəg biis, Na'abzɔ, is still alive it will come to him.

Kutəbis also inherited the ancestral shrines of his immediate forebears Baŋana, Pa'ana, and Sɔmnam. With these shrines go several strips of land, especially the large home farm (*saman*) adjoining the homestead, which are the patrimonial property of Sɔmnam's line of descent. On Kutəbis's death they will be inherited by his younger 'brother' Pa'anbəbis II. Lastly, Kutəbis inherited some land which had been allocated to his father Baŋana as a private plot and thereafter became the patrimonial property of Baŋana's descendants.

He also assumed paternal rights over Yidaan's children. As Yidaan's sons farm independently of him, he cannot command their labour, though they are bound to assist him if he is hard-pressed and asks them to do so. In theory Kutəbis has the unrestricted right to dispose of his late brother's daughters in marriage, and to use the bride-price paid for any of them as he pleases. Actually, he would not marry off any of the girls without consulting Yidaan's oldest son, Da'amo'o, and would, as we have seen, hand over the bride-price to Da'amo'o. He retains the right, however, to draw on the bride-price of any of Yidaan's daughters in a difficulty calling for payments he cannot meet. We have quoted an instance of this on p. 155. Kutəbis also nominally inherited what was left of the livestock and clothes Yidaan had amassed,[1] but handed them over to Da'amo'o, retaining only the right to use them in an emergency. As regards Yidaan's widows, the older woman chose to stay on with Da'amo'o, as she was past the age of child-bearing. The younger accepted Kutəbis as she had a child at the breast. But it was confidently said, by members of the lineage, that she would probably leave him when her child was old enough for her to have another.

Parallel Significance of 'Not having a Mother alive'

613 593 •784 601 On the principle that both parents have an equally indispensable part in the procreation and upbringing of children, whether or not one has a mother alive is also socially recognized. There is a general taboo binding on everybody who has a mother alive. They may not drink water out of an earthenware dish (*laa*); they must always use a calabash (*ŋman*), the normal drinking vessel. This is connected with the ritual use of earthenware dishes as food and drinking-vessels in the purification of

[1] This was because Kutəbis and Yidaan were *saarət*, full brothers. As we shall see later, full brothers have a very great degree of social equivalence and are entitled to inherit one another's personal effects in a way that half-brothers are not.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

orphans at funerals. The ritual prohibitions falling on 'those who have a father alive', at funerals of old men, also fall on 'those who have a mother alive', at funerals of old women. But owing to the lesser importance of maternal than of agnatic descent in determining social status, whether or not one has a mother alive is of less social importance than whether one has or lacks a 'father'. The range within which classificatory 'mothers' are socially recognized is the same as for 'fathers', since 'mothers' derive their status from their husbands. But it is only the wives of 'fathers' belonging to one's own nuclear lineage who receive the deference due to a 'mother'. Beyond that range it is a voluntary matter whether or not one treats a 'father's' wife with the respect due to a 'mother'. Putting this in another way, a proxy mother is usually one's own mother's co-wife within the limits of, at most, the expanded family, who might or actually did take one's mother's place in bringing one up. It is this which distinguishes a 'mother' who is a 'father's wife' from one's natural mother's uterine sisters and kinswomen, who are also called 'mothers'. In one matter only is the recognition as classificatory 'mothers' of the wives of all 'fathers' of the inner lineage strictly enforced, and that is in regard to incest. This is of special importance when it comes to the inheritance of widows.

To take an example again from Ziŋgan biis, Da'amo'o and Ɔndieso both call Kutɔbis's wives their 'mothers'. They would not be able to marry any of them if Kutɔbis were to die. But if one of the wives dies, Da'amo'o, having lost his own mother, is obliged to go through the rites of mourning as for a mother. Ɔndieso will not. He may have his head shaven as a sign of mourning for her if she was particularly friendly with his family, or was particularly helpful to him, say by taking care of his wife during a difficult confinement. But this would be a voluntary gesture of respect, not a ritual obligation. If they are both present at a funeral of an old woman who is not married into their inner lineage, Da'amo'o will refrain, out of respect for his proxy mothers, from taking part in the rites forbidden to 'those who have mothers alive'. Ɔndieso will not, unless he wants to make a special gesture of respect to Kutɔbis or his wives. The personal relationships of the people concerned are irrelevant within the nuclear lineage. Da'amo'o, in fact, heartily dislikes Kutɔbis's senior wife and has a strong affection for Ɔndieso's proxy mother and his (Da'amo'o's) classificatory mother, Yinduuŋ, who is living with Ɔndieso. But he cannot escape the mourning rites he must undergo if the former dies, and is not obliged to undergo these rites if the latter dies.

The difference in the conventional attitudes towards a proxy mother and a proxy father is also shown in the way Tallensi look at the duty of supporting an aged parent, a subject we shall consider further in Chapter VII.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

CHAPTER VIII

TENSIONS IN THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

Rivalry between Parents and Children

593 578 PERHAPS the most extraordinary feature of Tale parents' relations with their children is the recognition, in custom and belief, of the latent antagonism behind their mutual identification and comradeship, their devotion and co-operation. We have already had some glimpses of this. A psycho-analyst might say that the Oedipus complex is apparently openly recognized in Tale culture. He would have to add that it is built into their social organization in such a way as to enable them to control it. The mystical ideas and ritual symbols in which the rivalry between successive generations is clothed form the cultural mechanism by which it is neutralized and made to serve socially useful ends.

● 784 [184] 578 593 We have discussed the taboos observed by first-born children among the Namoos in our previous book. We showed there[1] that the distinguishing mark of all Namoo clans as opposed to non-Namoo clans is the observance of these taboos. Among all Namoos a man's first-born son and daughter may not eat the domestic fowl, may not wear any of their father's garments or his quiver, or look into his granary during his lifetime. The latter taboos are connected with the fact that a man's clothes and quiver and granary are intimately identified with his social personality. As the natives put it, a man's clothes and quiver are imbued with his bodily exuviae from constant contact with his body, while his granary is associated with his unique status in the patricentral family. It is easy to see that these possessions are peculiarly apt symbols of a man's social self. It is not surprising, therefore, that though these taboos are not formally observed by non-Namoos analogous usages with the same symbolic significance occur among them.

In our previous book we studied the significance of these taboos as quasi-totemic symbols in the system of inter-clan relations; but they have other dimensions of meaning as well, like all Tale customs and ideas that give expression to fundamental elements in their social organization. For they go back to deep and universal tendencies in human psychology. These taboos have a particular meaning in the contemporary structure of Tale society as symbols of corporate units; but underlying this is the deeper meaning they have in the relations of successive generations and for the individual himself in the conduct of his life.

We are concerned here with these latter aspects of their meaning. We cannot attempt to unravel all that lies behind them, but their super-

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, chs. v and viii.

[p. 222]

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

ficial symbolism is transparent. What they mean is that a child may not be equated with his or her father while he is alive. As we have observed, though these taboos do not occur among non-Namoos, the ideas and sentiments they express are as frankly admitted by them as by Namoos. It was a Tenzugu (Talis) man who gave me the clearest statement I obtained on the struggle between the Destinies (*Yina*) of father and son. I remember also being struck by this during the ceremony of exorcising the evil Predestiny of Sinkawol of Kpata'ar's wife. Just as the most important rite of all was begun somebody noticed that Tiezien, Sinkawol's proxy father, was absent. Nyaaŋzum, Sinkawol's proxy grandfather and Tiezien's proxy father, shouted for Tiezien to come out of the homestead. Tiezien shouted back, in some anger, 'No, I won't come. They are exorcising my daughter-in-law's *Yin* and I should be there? Oh no. Is she your (plural) wife or mine? No, it is not for me to be there.' There was a moment's pause and then Nyaaŋzum called back, 'Well, leave it then, you are right.' The point was that a man must not equate himself with his son, particularly where the latter's procreative status is concerned. But grandfather and grandson are equated with each other, as we shall see more fully later. And by the same principle a woman must not be equated with her daughter in her reproductive capacity. Thus when a man's daughter becomes a mother for the second or third time he gives up sleeping with her mother even if she is still of child-bearing age. Tallensi call this an important taboo. It is significant also that among both Namoos and non-Namoos an analogous taboo to that of the father's granary holds between a mother and her first-born daughter. While her mother is alive a girl may not uncover her mother's chief storage-pot (*u pu sugəl u ma doko*). This taboo is not stressed so much as those that discriminate a child from its father, as might be expected in a society so thoroughly organized around the patrilineal line. But it does show that the tension between the generations among the Tallensi is not the product of *patria potestas* only, but arises out of the whole network of the relations between parents and children.

The avoidances of first-born children are not the only customary expression of the tension between the generations. A man and his oldest child do not eat together. 'You and your oldest child do not dip your fingers into the same dish of food together,' the natives say, 'for if you did perhaps his finger-nail might scratch you and that would bring misfortune on both of you.' This prohibition is not subject to ritual sanctions, though the misfortune that would follow the symbolic act of aggression would be of a mystical character. Tallensi share a dish with the youngest child for preference; and it is not an uncommon sight to see a man eating with his youngest child while his oldest son is sitting near by eating separately.

Then there are the restrictions we have already mentioned that must be

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

spoke of their ancestral home at Zubiuŋ as their 'real home (*ti yir ni yɛlmɛŋər*)' to which they would all return sooner or later. Two years later, in fact, both Saanbuohba and Baŋ-Duun did return to Zubiuŋ.

As these examples show, though the solidarity of siblings derives its psychological content from the fact of their growing up together, its validity as a norm of social relations among siblings is a function of the total field of lineage relations. In other words, whatever the personal relations of siblings may be, their indestructible social bonds spring from their common jural and ritual relationship to their parents; and 'sibling' in this context stands not only for individuals but for lineages, while 'parent' stands for any ancestor that may be relevant in a particular situation.

We must add that the friction which sibling rivalry between brothers occasionally gives rise to does not come to an end with their economic and residential separation. Self-interest among Tallensi provokes clashes of personality and of rights as much as anywhere else in the world. Tallensi say that the gravest disputes between brothers of the same nuclear lineage arise over land, though such disputes are very rare. Unlike the petty squabbles of day-to-day life, they are apt to end in blows and even bloodshed. I heard of several instances that had occurred during the previous thirty years, but only one came to my notice during my stay among the Tallensi. It was, however, a typical case. When Gunyam died, his sons Taagbin and Zayahkpɛmɔre inherited his lands and chattels, with Taagbin, the oldest son, as the senior heir. Taagbin allocated a portion of their late father's home farm to his younger brother. But the latter objected that he was being unfairly treated. The dispute ended in a fight in which Zayahkpɛmɔre was injured in the hand. Public opinion was severely critical of Zayahkpɛmɔre; for, as a Tale saying goes, an older brother who inherits his father's property and position is like one's father and should be treated with similar respect. But, as an elder of their section shrewdly pointed out when we were discussing this case, stupid as he is reputed to be, Zayahkpɛmɔre would never have raised his hand against Taagbin if the latter had been his proxy father and not his brother. Brothers quarrel just because they have equal rights in relation to one another.

There are two offences, however, which irrevocably disrupt the bonds of brotherhood if one brother commits either of them against another. As we have previously stated, it is a grave sin for a man to seduce the wife of a brother of the same inner or medial lineage. If this happens, the Tallensi say, the injured man and the culprit 'will never eat together again, will never sacrifice together again'. Because of this taboo a man may not sit on the same sleeping-mat as his brother's wife. 'It is as if he wanted to sleep with her', the natives say. Hence, also, it is considered to be improper for a man to address his brother's wife while he is alive as wife (*pɔya*), though he may speak of her to non-members

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of the same inner lineage as 'our wife (*ti pɔŋa*)' or even as 'my wife (*m-pɔŋa*)'; and, reciprocally, a woman speaks of her husband's brother of the same inner lineage as 'my husband (*n-sɛt*)' or, preferably, as 'my husband's older (younger) brother (*n-sɛt-bier* or *n-sɛt-pit*)', but does not address him thus. The proper reciprocal term of address is *n-kpee* ('my neighbour'), or *n-dakii* ('my sibling-in-law'). The terms for husband and wife are used in address only between a man and a distant clan-brother's wife.

The penalty for breaking this taboo has both a literal and a figurative meaning, in the sense that the brothers will never share anything again or take part in corporate activities as co-members of the same lineage. It amounts to social and religious ostracism for the sinner, and Tallensi say he would not long survive or his line of descent would perish. A similar penalty is said to follow the killing of a brother, whether it happens by accident or design. As we know, incest with a brother's wife is said to occur, though extremely rarely; fratricide by a brother of the same inner lineage as the victim is felt to be so abhorrent as to be likely to happen only by accident in exceptional circumstances. It has happened once or twice in the past, informants say, when brothers fought over the division of farm-land, but I have not heard of any cases having occurred in the last thirty years or so.[1]

The strength of the sanction we are considering can be judged from its incidence, in an attenuated degree, in cases of intra-clan homicide where the parties are not brothers of the same inner lineage. If this happens, whether intentionally or by accident, the maxim 'A cow has trampled her calf to death (*naaf n-nɔ bu bii ku*)' applies—that is to say, it is as if a cow had trampled its calf to death; so it is forbidden, on pain of bringing down the wrath of the ancestors, for the victim's close agnates to 'cancel the debt' by killing one of the slayer's close agnates. This rule holds also for lineages or clans interlinked by clanship or ritual ties. The guilty party offers expiatory sacrifices to the Earth and then a ritual reconciliation is effected between the two units concerned. But thenceforth the close agnates of the slayer—members of his nuclear lineage, usually—will not participate in a sacrifice in which the close agnates of the victim take part. If the homicide was deliberate, this taboo will even extend to all the patrilineal descendants of the two men. Thus Wakii-Sagbarug yidem and Kuruugdem are adjacent maximal lineages linked by clanship and ritual ties. On certain occasions they meet to sacrifice together at an Earth shrine common to them. The Kuruug people refrain from attending these sacrifices if the chief officiant is a member of a particular segment of Sagbarug yiri. A Kuruug man told me the reason for this in confidence. Some four or five

[1] There is a legend that one of the early chiefs of Tongo slew his brother in order to get the chiefship. Tallensi say this was following the customs of the Mamprusi. Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. iv.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
FE11 Tallensi FE11

593 generations ago the ancestor of this segment of Sagbarug yidɛm slew the
682 ancestor of a segment of Kuruug, hence the two units may not sacrifice
784 together. To do so would be to court the wrath of their collective ancestors.

593 Our analysis shows that what makes a rupture of the ties of brother-
578 hood, at any level of lineage organization, so grave a matter, is the fact
602 that it involves a rupture of the common filial relationship of the parties to a parent or ancestor. For it is from this relationship that the persons or units concerned derive their status of brotherhood relatively to one another.

593 In the preceding discussion we have spoken of brothers or siblings
602 sometimes in the primary sense of these terms, sometimes in the classificatory sense. That is exactly how the natives use the kinship terms for siblings; and the speech context by itself does not always indicate the exact genealogical degree of the relationship between the speaker and the person referred to. Like the terms used for parents and children, these kinship terms only have a strict connotation, implying specific sentiments, rights, and duties within the standard classificatory range. Within the inner lineage, or at the utmost, in lineages of narrow span, the medial lineage, a person described by the speaker as his sister (*tau*) or older brother (*bier*) or younger brother (*pit*) can be shown by genealogical reckoning to be of his or her generation by birth, even if he or she belongs to a totally different age stratum. Thus Badiwona, aged 6, describes Tiezien, aged about 70, as his older brother because they have a common patrilineal grandfather; and Zoobon-Tɔŋ-Tɔbɔg's children call their contemporaries, Kurug's children, brothers and sisters because they have a common patrilineal great-great-grandfather and belong to the same inner lineage. The pattern of conduct and sentiment we have been describing holds within this range, with the qualification that the solidarity of siblings tends to be shallower and their equality of less personal consequence the more distant their genealogical connexion within the inner lineage. But so close-knit is the inner lineage as a corporate unit in relation to wider corporate groupings that these differences of degree very often vanish altogether, except for the difference between *soog* and *sunzɔ* siblings.

593 As usual, it depends on the situation and on the kind of interests
602 involved. The situation steers conduct and sentiment; it is an infallible
613 guide to the connotation of the kinship terms used in it. To take a few examples: A man may be nearly starving; he will be much more likely to receive a gift of grain from one of his matrilateral kinsmen than from a distant *sunzɔ* brother of the same inner lineage. Similarly, if a man is hard pressed in his farming programme, he will ask a uterine kinsman or an affinal kinsman to assist him and not a *sunzɔ* brother of the same inner lineage. These are personal problems and they are dealt with by invoking cognatic kinship ties. But in ritual and jural affairs it is the

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

male agnates. He is *yirdaan* by virtue of indisputable succession which carries with it ritual responsibilities for the whole joint family, legal and moral duties and rights and valuable economic privileges. His younger brothers and his sons share his dwelling as a rule, ortho-cousins or nephews occasionally. Everything depends on factors such as those previously enumerated when it comes to the constitution of a particular compound. But in general, genealogical distance imposes corresponding spatial and social arrangements. Thus, the secondary gate of a plural gate compound[1] is usually owned by an ortho-cousin or nephew (classificatory brother or son) of the *yirdaan*, except for the special case of a man's first-born son.[2]

The single dwelling or the single-gate compound is the habitation of one or more households, each consisting of an adult male, his wife (or wives), and his children. A householder may have younger unmarried brothers or sisters or an old mother dependent on him. Every married man is a householder, but households vary greatly in status according to their degree of social and economic differentiation within the joint family. This is determined not only by the stage of development it has reached, but also by kinship factors and by those individual social and psychological characteristics which we have referred to before. A newly married man, for example, is to all intents and purposes part of the household to which he was attached prior to his marriage, but he has a small degree of autonomy which increases from year to year.

A newly married wife has a room in the quarters of her husband's mother, if she is alive, or of his senior wife. In due course, however, whether it be a man's first or later wife, he must build her separate quarters. Hence, in a well-differentiated household every wife has her own quarters (*dug*) partitioned off from those of her co-wives or her mother-in-law. Here she and her children—the primary family—live, and here she is supreme mistress. A woman's quarters consists

[1] Two gates are usual, three gates infrequent, and more than three gates found only in exceptional circumstances.

[2] It is taboo for the head of a compound and his first-born son to continue to use a single entrance after the latter has married and founded a family, though this taboo is never enforced until the younger man's children approach adolescence. But few men live long enough to see their first-born sons make their own gateways.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
FE11 Tallensi FE11

of sleeping-rooms and kitchens (to be described later) distributed roughly in a semicircle round an open space, 10 to 15 feet across, bounded on one side by a co-wife's quarters or a low partitioning wall. This little close (*dendɔŋo*) is the central place in the life of the family. Here it takes its meals in the dry season; here friends are received; here most of the routine of family life goes on. A man's principal ancestor shrines are kept in his mother's or senior wife's *dendɔŋo*; and there he performs many of the frequently recurring rites of the ancestor cult. The women of a single household have adjacent quarters. Their husband's mother or the senior wife occupies the central quarters; junior wives or son's wives are on either side of her, forming altogether a rough circle or segment of a circle. A householder who is not also head of the compound has no room of his own. He keeps his private possessions in his senior wife's sleeping-room. Apart from this, it is the cardinal principle of family life that a man must divide his time, his affection, and his supplies of food with absolute impartiality between his wives.

Within the compound two other kinds of rooms are of special importance for our theme, the granaries and the grinding-rooms. Every independent agricultural unit has its own granaries which are said to belong to the head of the unit. His granary (*boor*) is a man's most private and personal possession. No woman may enter it, nor any man not directly authorized by the owner. Ritual prohibitions associated with it closely identify a man's granary with his social personality. As one informant put it, with a flash of insight, 'Your granary is like your soul'.

One or more grinding-rooms (*neer*) belongs to every well-differentiated household. These are discussed later.

The family structure thus outlined is the basis of a domestic economy and of a configuration of moral, legal, religious, and personal relationships which can best be described as a compromise between strong centralizing or integrating tendencies and powerful differentiating tendencies. In the domestic economy of food, our sole concern in this paper, every unit in the system is completely autonomous in some respects and dependent upon a more comprehensive unit in others. It is a fluctuating compromise, slowly changing. Births, deaths, marriages, and their social consequences, even the mere lapse

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

184 compared with its neighbours, in respect to those components of its
326 culture connected with its craft. Only sons of that lineage may be
565 taught the craft of the smith; and even those who through lack of
463 inclination or ability do not learn it share the ideology associated with it and submit to ritual and moral constraints in virtue of this. Because of their traditional craft the men of Sakpee do not eat the hedgehog until they have successfully made a piece of ironwork; and when they were driven from the Tong Hills, abandoned their homes and property but carried with them the sacred anvils. Similarly, the social sphere of the Hill Tallis contrasts in many respects with that of their Namoo neighbours on account of their different ritual systems.

184 Yet it is necessary to note that these differences do not detract from the essential homogeneity of the social sphere for all the Tallensi. They are differences in the substance of some cultural definitions, not in the forms and functions of institutions. The totemic taboos of the
● [784] Hill Tallis are exactly paralleled by the prohibitions of first-born children eating the domestic fowl among the Namoos. What their sacred groves and initiation rites mean to the former, their first ancestor, sacred drums, and the chiefship mean to the latter. The psychological substratum of social behaviour is the same in both groups and in their associated clans, with a sole exception. The initiation cult of the Hill Tallis does give a bias to their ideology and so to their social sphere which the Namoos lack.[1] In our present inquiry these differences may be neglected since the dynamic relationships of the individual to his community are the same everywhere in Taleland. Whether a child is trained as a blacksmith or as a farmer, and whether he is inducted into the ritual and ideology of the ancestor cult alone, or into that of the sacred groves as well, the principles are the same.

156 This background will be continuously discerned in our study of Tale education. But a few clinching observations may be cited here to show that the child is not merely a supernumerary element of his society but thinks and feels himself to be a part of it.

867 1. I was walking with Samane and his two small sons (8–9 years)[2]
243

[1] See M. Fortes, 'Ritual Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', *American Anthropologist*, vol. xxxviii, no. 4.

[2] All ages are estimated, but the probable error of such an estimate is at least 12 months.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

which children of 9 or 10 are fully familiar with and the compulsion of which they experience to the same degree as the adults; and there is the whole body of implicit moral norms which regulate the day-to-day life of the family and emerge in the duties of children to one another and to their parents.

I have already mentioned the prohibition in some clans against the eating of fowl by first-born children. By contrast with the voluntary abstention from fowl meat practised by women, this is a taboo of supreme mystical value for these clans and is exactly parallel to the totemic avoidances of other clans. The Hill Tallis, for instance, may not eat tortoise, some may not eat crocodile or python, and others taboo dog. A 5-year-old knows his or her personal or clan taboo, and can state it emphatically. The remedy for a chance infringement of such a taboo is extremely simple—e.g., in the case of the fowl, crushing some fowl droppings in water and giving the child the fluid to drink. Again the supernatural penalty for a breach is of a vague and general kind. In some cases it is thought that it would lead merely to an eruption of scabies on the head; in others it is said that the offender would slowly lose health and strength. These sanctions, however, are not the effective agencies maintaining the observances. Breaches of these rules are exceptional, both among children and among adults. A Talaŋa submits to a food taboo in virtue of a configuration of positive habits and dispositions built up in childhood, not through fear of the sanctions. From the time that it is a babe in arms a child is prevented from tasting or even touching any food which it is prohibited from eating. Later it will be called away from where its companions are sitting over a fire roasting titbits of food forbidden to it—'Come here, you mustn't eat that; it is forbidden.' I once observed a child of about 5 standing aloof while a group of his brothers and sisters were consuming a dish of python meat—a prized delicacy. 'I don't eat python, it is my taboo,' he explained, with an expression of complete aversion.

A vivid example of how food taboos are inculcated was provided by a biographical reminiscence of the chief of Tongo who, as a first-born, may not eat fowl. There was talk in his court-room of crops and famine in the old days, when an elder wondered if a man would eat a forbidden animal if he were starving. The chief, holding with

8:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1936 FE11 Tallensi FE11

184 Namoos and Tallis have a common cultural idiom, just as they have a single language. Their economic system is uniform and inclusive of both communities; their laws of land tenure, of inheritance and successions, of marriage and legitimacy are identical. The ritual practices and the mystical notions of their religious and magical institutions are the same in form and dynamical character, even if they sometimes differ in content, especially in the domestic cult of the ancestors. This common corpus of social definitions and of pragmatic organization is the inevitable correlate of the conditions of social and economic intercourse normally prevailing between the two communities. They have been intermarrying for generations, and this entails common legal techniques and principles, as well as a single type of domestic organization. They exchange commodities in trade, gifts, and in the discharge of kinship obligations: for every Namoo has numerous cognatic kinsmen among the Tallis and the Tallis among the Namoos. Kindred come into frequent contact with one another, not only on ritual occasions, such as sacrifices to ancestors and in funeral ceremonies, but also in ordinary social and personal affairs.

621 622 193 Upon this homogenous basis of social and economic relations between individuals and familial groupings is superposed a political structure the essential principle of which is a polar opposition defined and emphasized by the most stringent ritual observances. The head of the Tongo Namoos has the title Naa or Chief. The chieftanship (naam) was brought to Tongo by its founder, Mosur, from Mampurugu. It remains the absolute prerogative of his descendants. Every new chief of Tongo buys his rank from an hereditary elector who represents the chief of Mampurugu. The colonies and co-clans of Tongo elect chiefs of lesser grade. But no Tallis may hold the title Naa. Their heads of clans and lineages are typically entitled Tendaana, (literally "owner of the land"). The principal Tendaanaships in the land are attained by rights of patrilineal succession. The chief of Tongo claims suzerainty over all the Tale settlements. Actually his executive authority reaches only to his own settlement, while a Tendaana's executive authority hardly extends beyond his own lineage. Balancing the chiefs' political claims, the Tendaanas assert their precedence in virtue of their "ownership of the land." Moreover, each of the principal Tendaanas claims precedence over all the others, such is the degree of local autonomy. Normally an occasion never arises where these rival claims can be pitted against one another. They are vaunted in the presence of the ethnologist, or in the ritual and domestic assemblies of kinsfolk.

184 184 Chief and Tendaana, Namoos and Tallis, are further separated by a barrier of taboos, many of them symbolic. The chief may not tread upon

8:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1936 FE11 Tallensi FE11

the earth with his bare foot; he may not pluck a blade of grass or engage in agriculture, and so on. Tendaanas observe none of these taboos. They again may not wear any cloth garment, but only skins, for a white gown of cloth is put upon the chief at his investiture. Cloth garments, horses, guns, are traditionally tabooed to all Tallis, since they were characteristic of the Namoos. Chief and Tendaana regard these taboos as of the very substance of their respective offices, as moral obligations to their respective communities. So also property lost on the land or stray animals must be handed over to a Tendaana on pain of supernaturally inflicted death. But stray cows, dogs, or vagrant humans go to the chief. Most important of all, the religious practices of the Tallis are dominated by the cult of the earth shrines (tɔŋbana)—sacred groves, streams, pools, etc.—to which the Namoos as a group have no access.

The polarity thus institutionally registered is paralleled by standardized political attitudes. In the sporadic fights of pre-European days Tallis and Namoos were traditional enemies. This is not only recollected in tales but vividly expressed in the military pantomine which accompanies every funeral ceremony. Tallis at their funerals fling taunts and challenges at the Namoos, and the latter retaliate at their funerals. When his patriotism is aroused, a member of one group will speak of the other group superciliously or derogatorily, forgetting for the moment, perhaps, that they are his own mother's kinsmen.

Between Chief and Tendaana, between Namoos and Tallis, there are barriers, but not a gulf, an equilibrium and not an irreconciliable disjunction. The fulcrum of this equilibrium is the Tendaana of the Gbizug lineage. Geographically placed between the Namoos and the Tallis, he is the ritual and political mediator between them. The principal Tendaana of Baari can directly approach the Chief of Tongo; but the Tendaanas of the Hill Tallis or of non-Tale clans can only approach the Chief through the Gbizug Tendaana. In the old days it was he who made peace between the traditional enemies after a fight. A ritual and social equilibrium of high tension exists between Gbizug and Tongo, symbolized in the peculiar relations of the Tendaana and the Chief. Tradition, distorted by each side to its own aggrandizement, relates that it was the first Gbizug Tendaana who received and gave land to settle on to the ancestor of the Tongo Namoos. The final and most solemn of the rites by which a new chief of Tongo is inducted, rites which will be referred to again, must be carried out by the Gbizug Tendaana. Upon him rests the responsibility and the privilege of making the sacrifices for the most sacrosanct fetish of the Tongo Chieftainship, that which safeguards the life and well-being of the Chief and thus

8:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1936 FE11 Tallensi FE11

From this divination emerges, first, whom the ancestor spirits have selected to bring the sacred Gingauŋ drum, after which the Namoos' festival is named, out of the Chief's court chamber. There are two Gingauŋ drums: a small one, the sacred one brought by their ancestor Mosur, and a large one, subsequently manufactured merely to add liveliness to the dance. Second, the seance establishes what sacrifices have to be made upon the shrines of the original ancestors of Tongo. In this seance the Chief and his elders, the representatives, metaphorically speaking, of the clan conscience, show how vividly the hallowing of the tradition is felt by them. The sacrifices have a double intention; to thank the ancestors for a successful harvest of early millet and for the standing crop of guinea corn, and to avert quarrels and disputes which might occur when great concourses of people flock to the dance. It is for fear of quarrels which might lead to bloodshed and thus to unknown supernatural calamities that only a youth authorized by the ancestor spirits may inaugurate the dance. The divination, as befits the joyful occasion, is nevertheless cheerful.

The sacrifices are carried out immediately, and ritual then sinks into abeyance for a time. The nightly dance occupies the center of social interest, until the moon begins to wane. For a night or two the children have almost complete possession of the dedicated dancing field, practicing their awkward steps. With the waxing moon adults throng to the dance, until in the end even young mothers come out carrying sleepy infants, and the drummers cannot be seen in the center of the great mass of poeple.

This first phase is aptly known as the Gingauŋdeema, "play Gingauŋ." It is monopolized by the younger adults and adolescents, who try out the dancing songs. But the season gets its name mainly from the sexual effervescence associated with it. Women are the cause of the disputes which threaten the peace of the dance. Not a day passes without an elopement, planned on the dancing ground. Unfortunately, few of these marriages survive the festive period; and that, perhaps explains why there is a taboo against carrying out any of the legal formalities of marriage during this month. For Baari and Tongo, the Moon of Waters is a dangerous month, in spite of the festivity, because of the human passions aroused, as is evident from the fact that it is a grave sin to shed blood on the earth, even from a scratch or cut. Strangers, and in particular Tallis, flock to watch the dance, and of course to find lovers. But only Namoos may enter the dance.

A fortnight's lull ensues during which the guinea-corn is harvested. Then comes the Moon of Daa, so named from the final phase of the festival, and the "real Gingauŋ," Gingauŋ meŋa. But I must resist the tempta-

8:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1936 FE11 Tallensi FE11

tion to enter into an acount of the dynamics of the dance itself. It is the first Gingauŋ incomparably enhanced. The older men, expert dancers, are in charge, though the younger ones and even women and children have full freedom to join.

A point of psychological interest is the choral refrain which provides the organizing slogan for the dance. It consists of a verse taunting a member of a co-clan of Tongo with some moral failing. To taunt the Tallis thus would be tantamount to declaring war.

The festival reaches a climax in the second week of the moon, when it squeezes out every other social activity. In the dance this is marked by a striking bit of pantomime which symbolizes the pride of the Namoos in their chieftainship and chiefly ancestors. Suddenly, long after midnight, when the moon is at its highest and the dance at a pitch of intensity, a dozen solemn figures begin to press slowly towards the center of the dance. Spectators and dancers make way for them. They stand in rank, shoulder to shoulder, unlike the dancers who form a file. The dancers shuffle, leap and stamp, but they bob gravely from foot to foot, erect, faces set like masks, chanting a low, wordless chant. They wear faded red caps and gorgeous, though sometimes tarnished, gowns—the garb of chiefs—and carry spears. They represent their grandfathers and ancestors who had been chiefs and men of rank. The natives delight both in the dramatic contrast, and in identifying the chiefs whom the mummers represent.

And now ritual returns. On the fifteenth night there is no dancing. On the contrary, not a single person stirs out of doors after dark. For that night all the ancestors of Tongo come to dance Gingauŋ, and he who hears or sees the phantom dance dies at once. Everybody hangs out his or her finest garments for the ancestors to borrow for their dance—spiritually, of course. For they keep a sharp look-out against human thieves, who have been known not to respect the occasion. Next day, towards noon, the Baari Tendaana calls upon the Chief of Tongo, bringing a small pot of consecrated beer. All present must drink of it, and the ancestors too, for a gourd-full is sent out to be poured on the grave of Mosur. It is a convivial scene, which instantly becomes serious as the Chief begins to address the Tendaana. This is the gist of his speech: The day has returned for us to meet as our ancestors used to, and to do as they did so that we shall have untroubled sleep, marry new wives, and beget many children. We have had a good harvest. May we all live to see Gɔlib and sow our millet in that moon successfully. May my chiefly ancestors and Mosur permit this and permit us to gain new life so that next year at this time we again celebrate Daa. The Tendaana responds with a similar blessing, saying that Baat

8:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1936 FE11 Tallensi FE11

Daa (the supreme bɔyar of the Baari people) and Mosur will jointly prosper the land. Then he departs. That day Baari celebrates Daa. 796

That same evening the large Gingauŋ drum is escorted to Baari by the Gbizug Tendaana and the Wakyi Tendaana, following a ritual path. All Tongo flocks to Baari to dance with great enthusiasm on a traditional spot outside the grove of Baat Daa. Near the dance, but silently aloof, wait the Gbizug and Wakyi Tendaanas. A few hundred yards away, as if indifferent to the dance, young men of Baari assemble, wearing their ritual garb, a goatskin. When the Baari Tendaana and his ritual coadjutors arrive to join them, the Gbizug and Wakyi Tendaanas are summoned. Greetings are exchanged, and then led by the Baari Tendaana, the whole company files away in a most solemn and silent procession, brought up by the youngest members carrying pots of consecrated beer. With utter gravity this procession thrice encircles the dancers who continue to dance as if oblivious to this. Anyone who dares to break through the encircling procession is doomed to a supernatural death. The procession files away again, into the sacred grove. There the Tendaanas pour libations of beer to Baat Daa, calling down the very same blessings as had been invoked by the Chief earlier in the day. They drink the beer and send a small pot out to the representative of the Chief, who is among the dancers. Now the Tendaanas' procession emerges, again solemnly encircles the dancers, and files away. At a tree which marks the path to Tongo they stop, and marching round it in a circle, chant a song the burden of which is Mosur boot kuliga ("Mosur wants to go home"). Upon this signal the allusion of which is obvious to all, the dance breaks up, the ritual is over. 796 535 [784]

That finishes the Gingauŋ dance for a year. The next three days at Tongo are given over to the gayest festivities of the season, the celebration of Daa. This is a New Year's festival, a fitting conclusion to the dancing season. Dressed in their best and gaudiest clothes, the whole of Tongo assembles at the Chief's compound on the day after the rites at Baari. From far and near, Tongo women who have married away return to their homes, many bearing gifts of special food from their husbands. The Chief's house throngs with his people and strangers. His elders bring him presents of guinea fowls and he, sitting in state, has a bullock slaughtered, part of which he shares amongst them. The Chief, it is true, gets the better part of this exchange of gifts, but good form is satisfied. The afternoon is devoted to light-hearted dancing in praise of the Chief. 796 [574]

The Gbizug Tendaana has also celebrated Daa, but very quietly. That evening, however, Chief and Tendaana meet in ceremonial. The scene is the dancing ground. This is a dedicated area which may not be cultivated. 796 778

8:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1936 FE11 Tallensi FE11

For this was the site of the first Gbizug Tendaana's compound when he received Mosur; and it is here that the Gbizug Tendaana receives every newly elected Chief of Tongo. After his investiture the Chief must never set foot in it again.

Towards evening a brother of the Chief arrives at the dancing ground, wearing the red cap and the gown, the insignia of a chief, and followed by boys carrying pots of beer. He takes his seat on the flat rock on which every newly elected chief sits down to await the Gbizug Tendaana. For an hour or two he sits gravely there, receiving the humble greetings of the men of Tongo. He is Chief for the nonce. Then a messenger arrives to announce the Gbizug Tendaana. The latter, escorted by men of his lineage, arrives in the dark and greets the mock-chief. The beer is divided out among those present, and then the Tendaana retires a dozen paces. In a voice inaudible to the Namoos, he calls upon his ancestor, the first Tendaana, and asks for the blessings of a good harvest, wives, children, and happiness in the coming year. The mock-chief dismisses his people and takes the homeward path, followed at some distance by the Tendaana and his people. As soon as he arrives at the Chief's compound, he and every other person in the compound, including the Chief himself, hides behind closed doorways in the rooms. The Tendaana enters a silent and empty compound. He goes to the secret place where the sacrosanct Chieftainship fetish is kept, pours a libation to it, and asks blessings for the Chief and all the land. When he has finished he enters the Chief's room to offer him New Year greetings, and so departs. Thus is the Chief every year renewed by a symbolic drama reenacting his first installation.

Two more days of festivity remain, during which all Tongo celebrates the New Year. Great quantities of food are cooked; there is visiting and counter-visiting, especially by affinal and cognatic relatives, and every one congratulates his neighbor on having seen another year. But the major interest of Daa is the holocaust of sacrifices which accompanies it. Fowls, guinea fowls, dogs, sheep, goats are slaughtered by the dozen in sacrifice to ancestors and to medicine fetishes. The roots of the latter are renewed, and thus given a new lease of life. There is more dancing to celebrate this, and another visit of the Baari Tendaana to the Chief to invoke blessings for the coming year. When the moon ends a few days after, the Namoos have finally done with their Harvest and New Year festival. Before that the Chief may not eat of the new guinea corn, though commoners do.

Two points deserve notice in this series of ritual celebrations. First, they express clearly the ambivalent relationships between the Namoos and their neighbors, and the bridging function of the Gbizug Tendaana. It is as if they were joined in a mutual responsibility each for the other,

8:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1936 FE11 Tallensi FE11

initiands next day. They have been treated throughout with veiled contumely, like infants and outcasts, seated on the bare ground, their backs to the ceremonial. When the sacrifices are over and the beer consumed, the initiands are brusquely dragged up, each in turn, to the altar of the bɔɣar. Kneeling before it, quivering with fear, his eyes blindfolded by the hands of one officiant, his hands clasping a chicken whose neck he saws off on a rough stone with the help of another officiant, he is made to swear repeatedly "If I tell anybody may I die." This then is the secret of the impregnability of the Tallis bɔɣar cult both to the Namoos and to the ethnologist.

Before they leave, the meat and flour of all the sacrifices are divided out according to strict rules of prerogative; the initiands being fed with a tiny piece of meat and flour dumpling each. The rôle of each participant kinship group is defined in terms of the officiant it elects, the contributions it makes to the sacrifices, and the share of meat, beer, and flour it receives. The natives stress this organizational balance more jealously than details of ritual; for it is the structural framework which preserves the ritual collaboration. Finally, all the communicants, including those newly initiated, are daubed on brows, arms, and knees with consecrated red mud, the concrete emblem of the beneficient magic they are carrying home.

Bɔɣaraam, like Daa, is the occasion when married daughters return home with gifts of food and guinea fowls from their husbands, and men who have migrated to distant parts try to return for the ceremonies. Dancing follows after the ritual day. But as each settlement dances by itself, the Bɔɣaraam dancing is neither so impressive nor so great a focus of social interest as Gingauŋ. This time the Namoos are onlookers, for they may not enter the Tallis dances.

The Bɔɣaraam festival of the Hill Tallis thus appears to be homologous with the Gingauŋ and Daa of the Namoos, and the Daa of Baari, in its calendrical reference and its functional context. For Chief, Tendaanas, and elders, the fathers of the community who bear the greatest burden of responsibility for its welfare, the ritual is the dominant theme. For those of lesser social responsibility, the dancing and festivity, the fellowship of jubilation, are of major value. For everybody, these are festivals of reunion in which family and wider agnatic connections, the unique fact for the individual of having been born into a certain family and clan, receive special emphasis.

But what must chiefly interest us, in this paper, is to observe how these festivals differentiate and bind the Namoos and the Tallis. On the one hand it seems as if each community consolidates itself socially and morally by the very act of repulsing its neighbor. Behind its stone wall of exclusiveness,

8:Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1936 FE11 Tallensi FE11

Golib is a dangerous month, during which both Namoos and Tallis are subject to numerous taboos, mainly aimed at averting quarrels and strife at the dances and in everyday relations between the groups. It is forbidden to shed blood on the earth, lest supernatural death overtake one, to take a wife, to carry out the final ceremonies connected with delayed funeral rites, to wear cloth garments in any of the Hill Tallis settlements, and so forth. Marriages are the cause of most inter-group litigation, and funeral ceremonies represent social situations in which large numbers of people from different settlements congregate and often give rise to disputes. Throughout, the Namoos are spectators of the dancing and excluded from the ritual. But on two occasions they meet the Hill Tallis in ceremonial interaction. In the inaugural rites the Hill Tallis, led by their Tendaanas, march to all their sacred groves in succession blowing sacred whistles in honor of them. When they reach the sacred groves which lie in Tongo, every Namoo man, woman, and child hides indoors. A Namoo who sees these rites of the Hill Tallis risks the destruction of his entire home and family by the outraged sacred groves. Once again, therefore, are the Namoos and Tallis mutually insulated or segregated by the symbolism of unchallengable ritual, the living affirmation of tradition. But there is a ritual reintegration of the groups. The final rite of Golib requires the coöperation of the Chief of Tongo. Again led by their Tendaanas, the Hill Tallis come down to the Chief's house to dance; and there Tendaanas and Chief join together to beg for blessings upon the land, for the safety of the people and the abundance of crops.

182 796 784 [578]

To revert to the harvest festivals, the magical and religious value of the ceremonial to the group performing it must not blind us to its socially integrative functions. The former is mainly determined by the seasonal context of the festivals and is evidenced preeminently in commonplace techniques, such as the sacrifice. The latter, which is determined primarily by the context of the social structure, is evidenced in the ceremonies peculiar to the occasion. These differ completely in content, as between Namoos and Tallis, a fact which the natives would explain by citing the historically different origins of the two groups. This suggests the principle common to all the integrative ceremonies. It is the dramatization of the nodal, hence traditionally sanctioned, relationship in the social structure of each group —the Chieftainship at Tongo, the right of access to the bɔɣar among the Tallis. This fundamental bond is resuscitated in both the symbolical and the direct phases of the ceremonies. The Chief and the Gbizug or Baari Tendaana thus reimpose on each other those responsibilities which bind them to a common task; and, by the very same rites, the Chief and his

182 796